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CLASH OF THE TITANS

written by

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FIRST DRAFT

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OVER BLACK:

The thunder of HOOVES hammer against the earth. The ROAR of fire. Distant sounds of MAYHEM. Of conquest. Of death.

FADE IN:

EXT. ANCIENT GREECE - NIGHT

A city burns. Buildings and homes ablaze. Walls toppled, lives ruined. Everything trampled and destroyed.

On horseback, an ARMY of faceless SOLDIERS tears through the flaming ruins as rain begins to fall. Darkness envelopes them. Hate is their guide. Anything in their way dies.

Then, a MAN'S VOICE speaks over these horrific images.

VOICE (V.O.)

There was once a time when fear was as common as rain. An age where men found themselves not just fighting for their own lives, but fighting for the survival of humanity itself.

A DARK FIGURE rides from a plume of smoke. His horse rears up, exhaling a breath of steam, saliva rains from its mouth.

VOICE (V.O.)

In these days of darkness, there emerged a man so vile, it is said his heart was made of stone. His name was Calabus.

The rider looks ghastly in the light of the flames, his eyes empty holes in the pit of a black helmet, teeth gleaming yellow and fierce.

VOICE (V.O.)

A fallen Prince, Calabus was banished to the heathen of the East by his own people. There his hate smoldered and fumed, until he gathered about him an army of like-minded souls, mad men and mercenaries, each with his own debt to collect, each with his own hate to inflict upon the world.

Calabus surveys the burnt and scarred landscape. Satisfied, he waves his SOLDIERS on. They follow at his heels.

EXT. ANOTHER CITY - NIGHT

Calabus' army sacks another city. Vineyards and groves are torched. Soldiers pour lime onto every root and tree stump until every square yard is made foul.

VOICE (V.O.)

But unlike those that came before him, Calabus did not set out to conquer the world... he set out to destroy it.

EXT. PLAINS - EXTREME WIDE SHOT OF HIS ARMY - DUSK

Thousands strong, they stretch across a vast plain like a wave of darkness. As they march, the infantry parts, revealing --

A STATUE of the GODDESS HERA pulled by hundreds of groaning men. As her effigy moves forward, it blocks out the sun.

VOICE (V.O.)

This was a conflict born of the gods - a clash between Zeus and Hera over whether man would remain a pawn of the immortals or rise to claim his own freedom.

Before Calabus' army lie green fields and pastures. In their wake, nothing but black ash and soil. Not a blade of grass remains. Not a sign of life. Not a speck of hope.

EXT. PHOENICIA - DAY

A metropolis of ivory and gold, bathed in sunlight. A GREAT WALL encircles the city, bordered on one side by cliffs overlooking the Mediterranean, and on the other, by plains dotted with villas and vineyards.

VOICE (V.O.)

Phoenicia, favored polis of Zeus. The last great city left standing in the ancient world.

At the city's center stands a GIANT STATUE of the THUNDER GOD, ZEUS, lightning bolts clutched in his marble hands.

ON A DISTANT BLUFF

Calabus sits atop his mount, his army facing Phoenicia. Behind him, STORM CLOUDS roll in, the sky full of fury.

VOICE (V.O.)

It is here the battle would climax.

Calabus draws his sword, raising it above his head.

VOICE (V.O.)

And depending on the outcome, man would be led toward faith and freewill, or lost forever, somewhere between eternal darkness and reluctant oblivion....

Calabus swings his sword down. His army charges as the STORM CLOUDS roll in above them, enveloping the light.

DISSOLVE TO:

A SPIDER WEB...

Intricate in design. Three different SPIDERS share its space, working threads into its elaborate pattern. Suddenly, the web quakes, dust falling around it as --

INT. PHOENICIA'S GREAT WALL - ANTECHAMBER - WEEKS LATER

-- Concussions of battle echo. We PULL BACK from the web to reveal a dark, enclosed chamber.

A hundred CONSCRIPTS line the walls. WE PAN ACROSS NERVOUS FACES: These are not regular soldiers but shopkeepers, stable hands, street urchins - men of all trades compelled into service for lack of soldiers.

We come to rest on a COIN twirling between the fingers of a dirty hand. Two identical SCARS line the unseen man's forearms, unusual in form and pattern.

A nervous conscript named ACIS watches the coin.

ACIS
(off coin)
It brings you luck?

PERSEUS (26) raises his head, his shoulder length hair frames a chiseled, dirty face. He stops twirling the coin.

PERSEUS
Sometimes.

Suddenly, a CONCUSSION rocks the chamber. Two OFFICERS walk the line, handing out weapons and shields.

OFFICER
Positions! Keep your ranks close!

Perseus and Acis stand side by side, crowding close to a LARGE METAL DOOR. Beyond the door, the sounds of WAR.

OFFICER
Banish thoughts of retreat or failure!
No avenue remains, save victory or death!

Acis' hands shake. Perseus notices.

ACIS
May the gods protect us.

The doors are unbolted, swinging open to reveal --

A KILLING FIELD. A slaughterhouse of pure destruction.

PERSEUS
(off the battlefield)
There are no gods.

The Officer raises his sword above him.

OFFICER
To victory!

Perseus and the other conscripts scream a battle cry as they charge out to find --

EXT. PHOENICIA - DAY

HELL ON EARTH... Perseus emerges at the base of the wall. The once monumental city has been brought to its knees. Its massive fortifications sieged; its powerful navy broken and burning in the harbor.

Two hundred yards beyond the wall is an expanse of giant WOODEN SPIKES and BLOCKADES erected to keep the enemy at bay.

The SOUNDS of combat echo around Perseus: officers' shouts, the whine of horses, and the thunderous clang of clashing swords are carried by stray gusts of smoke-filled winds.

PERSEUS' GROUP races towards a failing line. A murderous HAIL OF ARROWS greets them. Perseus raises his shield. Two arrows pierce it, missing his arm by inches. Several MEN around him aren't so lucky.

AT THE FRONT LINES

Calabus' army unleashes a bombardment of CASKS filled with burning oil. They rain down in a storm of homicidal fury, exploding as if Hades himself were raining death upon them.

GENERAL RENA (50), leader of the Phoenician army, coordinates the defense. A seasoned general, he stands firm amidst the madness. A FIELD COMMANDER rushes forward.

RENA
The left flank?!

FIELD COMMANDER
It's faltering, sir. They'll soon breach
our lines!

RENA
Push them back!

FIELD COMMANDER
There's nowhere left to push!

RENA
Reserves?!

FIELD COMMANDER
None! We have no more blood to give!

A CISTERN explodes near them, flames spreading. Rena writes a MESSAGE, seals it with his ring.

RENA
Find a messenger!

PERSEUS and the CONSCRIPTS reach Rena's position. Backlit by the iron grey sky, the blood-thirsty ENEMY attacks, barely held at bay by the battered Phoenician lines.

Perseus and Acis raise their weapons, ready to charge, but a voice stops them.

FIELD COMMANDER
You!

Perseus and Acis turn. The Commander hands Acis the MESSAGE.

FIELD COMMANDER
To the Palace. HURRY!

Acis' eyes spark - a reprieve from battle. As Acis turns, something in the distant sky catches Perseus' attention.

PERSEUS' POV

The mayhem of the battlefield drains to a pale grey, as if robbed of color. Out of this greyness one thing stands out, glowing in intensity: a SINGLE ARROW arching through the sky.

Perseus realizes something horrible: the arrow is headed directly at him. He instantly shifts. The arrow misses him by inches. Unfortunately --

THE ARROW strikes Acis in the chest, dropping him.

The arrow's shaft sticks from Acis' chest at an awkward angle. The chaos around them is forgotten as Acis grips Perseus' hand. His eyes glaze over. Acis dies.

Perseus' hard exterior cracks, lost in the moment of another man's death, the finality and power of it overwhelming.

FIELD COMMANDER (O.S.)

You!

Perseus looks up as the ROAR of battle returns.

FIELD COMMANDER

Take the message! Now!

Perseus stands, grips the message tightly and races back towards the city. The bloodbath continues without him.

EXT. PHOENICIA'S STREETS - DAY

House fronts are barren, sallow and stark. Flower beds are filled with weeds. The empty streets strewn with rubble.

THE MARKETPLACE: a mishmash of bottom feeders and vagabonds. A few remaining stalls sell rotting fruits and vegetables; a BAKER peddles stale bread; others hawk good luck charms or amulets; all signs of a starving and desperate people.

A YOUNG THIEF (24) moves through the market, eyeing a skinned RAT hanging in a stall run by an OLD MAN.

The Thief rolls a rock onto his shoe, then flips it into a clay pot at the back of the stall.

The old man turns towards the sound. In that instant, the Thief grabs the rat, slipping it beneath his cloak. The old man looks back, notices nothing.

The Thief moves to an alley's entrance, pauses, looks to make sure no one has followed him, when --

A DAGGER is placed at his throat. The Thief reaches down to his own sheath, but his knife is gone.

VOICE (O.S.)

To take from an old man is low.

THIEF

You take what you can find. There are no rules.

The knife disappears. The Thief turns to see PERSEUS, who tosses the dagger back to him.

PERSEUS
You should be careful with your dagger.

The thief is NIKO, Perseus' best friend. A cynic since birth, Niko is street-wise and selfish to the core.

NIKO
(truly surprised)
You're alive.

PERSEUS
By inches.

Obvious emotion. These two have been through it together.

NIKO
How'd you slip away?

PERSEUS
I didn't.
(off Rena's message)
I'm bringing word from the front.

NIKO
I have news. You won't have to return.

Niko's statement hangs in the air.

NIKO
I've figured a way out. Right in front of us the whole time.
(grins, speaks low)
The sea cliffs.

PERSEUS
The sea cliffs? It'll be pitch black and the rocks are like daggers. The odds are good we'll die trying.

NIKO
And they're certain we'll die if we don't.
(pointed)
Look around us. Phoenicia will fall.
Why fall with it?

Perseus is hesitant. Niko isn't, his decision is made.

NIKO

I leave at midnight, from the South Wall.
With or without you.

With that, Niko turns and disappears around a corner, leaving Perseus' mind wrapped in a heavy moment.

EXT. PALACE - DUSK

The imposing palace crowns the highest ridge within the city's walls. Clinging to the side of the sea cliffs, its terraces stretch upward, culminating in spiral towers which stab into the sky like lances raised above an army.

Perseus is stopped at the MAIN GATES by two torch-bearing SENTRIES. He shows them Rena's message. They step aside.

EXT. PALACE TERRACE - SAME

We PAN ACROSS a windswept terrace, the Mediterranean and the battlefield visible in the distance. A FIGURE kneels before a SHRINE TO ZEUS, lighting incense and laurel.

The figure stands, revealing PRINCESS ANDROMEDA (24), a tall beauty with perfect crystal eyes set into a porcelain face. Her waist-length hair is elaborately braided, forming a striking contrast to her bare, unadorned back and arms.

Andromeda gazes out at the battlefield, eyes pained with guilt. She unconsciously touches her NECKLACE, a gold coin with an image of her FATHER at its center.

CASSIOPEIA (O.S.)
It's not your fault, Andromeda.

Andromeda turns to find her mother, QUEEN CASSIOPEIA (44). A regal woman whose eyes show her unflinching conviction.

ANDROMEDA
Why should our city die to spare my life?

CASSIOPEIA
Your life is the future.

Cassiopeia runs her hand through her daughter's hair.

CASSIOPEIA
When you marry, it is your child who will bring an era of light to this world... a reign of hope.

(beat)

(MORE)

CASSIOPEIA (CONT'D)

The gods revealed this prophecy to the Oracle. Your father died for that belief, as will we all, should fate demand it.

Cassiopeia's eyes return to the battlefield.

CASSIOPEIA

I will not surrender you to him.

Then, the door behind them opens. A SENTRY steps through. Perseus follows, until the Sentry stops him with a hand.

Backlit by the setting sun, Perseus sees the outline of Andromeda's figure silhouetted through the sheen of her gown. She is a vision.

SENTRY

Messenger from General Rena.

Cassiopeia nods. Perseus averts his eyes from Andromeda, but the moment was not lost on her, nor her mother.

INT. THE GREAT HALL - CONTINUOUS

The seat of Phoenician power. Ornate columns support an arched ceiling. STATUES OF THE GODS stand in alcoves, encircling a long marble table.

Phoenicia's MILITARY LEADERS are gathered here, bloody and exhausted. The men rise as Cassiopeia and Andromeda enter, followed by the Sentry and Perseus. Cassiopeia reaches the head of the table, turning to Perseus.

CASSIOPEIA

The message?

Perseus hands her Rena's letter.

CASSIOPEIA

Wait for my reply.

Perseus moves to a corner as Cassiopeia silently reads the letter. Her face falls as she hands it to a COMMANDER.

COMMANDER

(off message)

The outer blockades will fall.

CASSIOPEIA

How long?

COMMANDER

(doom)

Seven days... if that.

(beat)

If they breach the wall, they'll kill
everyone in the city.

This registers with Perseus.

COMMANDER #2

An all-out offensive is our best hope.

ANDROMEDA

An all-out offensive is no hope. We
haven't the men.

AN AGED VOICE (O.S.)

There is another choice.

The room's attention is drawn to an ORACLE (60's) as he steps
into the chamber. Draped in dull robes, his face remains
hidden beneath the shadowy folds of his cloak.

ORACLE (CONT'D)

In the mountains of Stygian live the
Sisters of Fate.

The Oracle holds up a sealed PARCHMENT.

ORACLE

This parchment contains a question; the
answer to which can save Phoenicia.

The officers grumble. The Commander turns to the Queen.

COMMANDER

The last stand is upon us. That should
be our focus, not running questions to
witches on behalf of oracles.

The Oracle walks closer to the terrace. Face still hidden,
he stares out across the battlefield.

ORACLE

His power grows as ours weakens...
victory will soon be his. The Fates are
the only hope now.

(beat)

Someone must go to Stygian.

A quiet hangs over the room. Perseus shuffles, Niko's
predictions of the city's fate now seem certain. Andromeda
turns to the commanders.

ANDROMEDA

We must listen to the gods. This is their will.

COMMANDER

The gods? Look outside, Princess. The gods have turned from us.

ANDROMEDA

Or perhaps it's us who've turned from them?

The Commander has no rejoinder to this.

COMMANDER #2

Even if we wanted to, there's no way out. We're wedged between Calabus' army and the sea.

ANDROMEDA

You're mistaken. There is a way.

Perseus' eyes narrow, intrigued by the Princess' declaration. Cassiopeia swings her focus to her daughter, who realizes she's overstepped. Perseus catches the silent exchange.

CASSIOPEIA

Beneath the palace, a tunnel leads beyond the battlefield.

COMMANDER

It matters not. We have no men to spare.

ANDROMEDA

We need only one.

Perseus steps forward, having found his opening.

PERSEUS

I'll go.

All turn to Perseus. The Commander angers.

COMMANDER

Hold your tongue!

Cassiopeia waves the Commander off, moving closer to Perseus.

CASSIOPEIA

Have you ever been to Stygian?

PERSEUS

No. But there are guides.

ANDROMEDA

Mother, he's a conscript, not even a real soldier. We can't trust him with this.

PERSEUS

Who's there left to trust, Princess?

Andromeda bristles. The Queen hides a subtle smile. She likes the fire in him.

CASSIOPEIA

Your name?

PERSEUS

Perseus.

Cassiopeia nods to the Commander, who takes off his CRIMSON OFFICER'S TUNIC. He places it around Perseus' shoulders.

CASSIOPEIA

You will go to the Fates, Perseus. And you will get their answer.

The Oracle hands the parchment to the Queen. She gives it to Perseus, clasping his hand in a forceful grip.

CASSIOPEIA

Your word.

Perseus can't avoid Cassiopeia's cutting stare.

PERSEUS

My word, Queen.

She lets go. It's a solemn moment.

CASSIOPEIA

Find a guide and return to the palace.
You leave Phoenicia tonight.

As Perseus turns to exit, the Oracle shifts into the light, revealing an ancient face with startling, milky-grey blind eyes. The dead eyes stare right through Perseus.

CUT TO:

INT. LIAR'S CORNER - NIGHT

The worst bar in the worst part of the city. A huge stuffed VULTURE is mounted above the long, dilapidated bar in this noisy, swill of a rummery.

The vulture's black eyes look down upon the curious mix of PATRONS: criminals and ne'er-do-wells; thugs and smugglers; all deserters hiding from their duty to fight.

AMMON (50) works the bar. He has a boxer's nose, crooked and broken, his face lined from experience. His skin is the dark copper of one who has spent his life in the sun.

Ammon pours an amber liquor for a DESERTER. The Deserter, still in uniform, has a nervous, broken look to him. This man knows death. He drinks, shakes it off.

DESERTER

I was working the fields when they rode in... All clad in black, like they'd risen from the dead.

(beat)

I knew then death had found us.

Ammon takes this in. Suddenly, the FRONT DOOR is kicked open. The SOUNDS of the distant battle boom in as a group of SOLDIERS enter, spreading out.

SOLDIER

Grab your wits and your courage! You've all been conscripted into the ranks!

Ammon sighs, reaches for the bottle and takes a long pull.

SOLDIER

Form up on me! We leave at once.

The patrons hesitate, wary. Nevertheless, they all form a line, realizing their destiny has found them.

Ammon doesn't move. The Soldier in charge approaches.

SOLDIER

Step in line.

AMMON

Son, I've already given as much as I can. I'm old. I can hardly move as I used to.

The Soldier draws his blade, resting it on Ammon's chest.

SOLDIER

In line.

Beneath the bar, Ammon grips a knife. A tense moment until --

VOICE (O.S.)

He goes with me.

Ammon and the Soldier look to see PERSEUS as he steps into the bar, his crimson officer's tunic standing out.

SOLDIER

Yes sir.

The Soldier lowers his sword. Then exits with his men, escorting the Patrons out. Ammon pours another drink.

AMMON

(off tunic)

Funny, I don't remember you being an officer in the Phoenician army?

PERSEUS

Do you think it suits me?

Ammon drinks the shot.

AMMON

No.

(beat)

Well? Have you come to pay me my money?

PERSEUS

One better. I've come to deliver you from the city.

EXT. PHOENICIA'S STREETS - NIGHT

Perseus and Ammon walk swiftly through a maze of streets, each more desperate and rubble-strewn than the next.

AMMON

They want you to deliver a question?

PERSEUS

Yes. A hollow act of desperation if you ask me.

AMMON

— And how is it you inherited this?

Perseus doesn't answer at first, unsure how to explain.

PERSEUS

I wasn't killed by an arrow.

Ammon nods, reading between the lines.

They emerge near the city's square. TORCHES illuminate the statue of Zeus which towers over them. Ammon stops Perseus.

AMMON

And why me? There are other guides.

PERSEUS

You looked after me when I was young. I owe you, Ammon. Owe you the chance to escape this nightmare.

AMMON

And what of my bar?

PERSEUS

Your bar won't be here in a week.

Perseus' eyes drift to the giant statue of Zeus, which has been blackened and tarnished by war.

PERSEUS

Nothing will.

EXT. THE SOUTH WALL - NIGHT

A full MOON. Niko waits at the South Wall above the sea cliffs. The palace looms behind him. From the darkness, he hears movement.

NIKO

Perseus?

No answer. Then, five soldiers - ROYAL GUARD - step from the shadows. Niko's face sinks as they draw their blades.

EXT. A SMALL COURTYARD - THE PALACE - NIGHT

Perseus and Ammon wait with a Sentry in a secluded courtyard which fronts a small temple. This is the inner sanctum of the royals, set deep within the palace.

Footsteps echo from O.S.. ROYAL GUARDS approach, escorting Niko. He and Perseus lock eyes, Niko's asking "What the hell's going on?" Perseus' eyes answer, "Just play along."

ROYAL GUARD

This the one you wanted?

PERSEUS

He'll do.

Ammon throws a pack of provisions to Niko, scrutinizing him.

AMMON

He seems a bit scrawny for a pack-boy.

Niko shoots Ammon a dirty look, it's clear they know one another. A GUARD steps forward.

GUARD

Follow me.

INT. TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS

The Guard escorts them past a group of praying PRIESTESSES and into the temple which honors Apollo.

Inside, their steps echo, taking on an exaggerated air of importance. Niko whispers to Perseus.

NIKO

Why are we here?

PERSEUS

The Queen asked that a parchment be taken to Stygian. I volunteered our services.

NIKO

What are you talking about?

PERSEUS

Leaving, Niko. No cliffs. No climbing. No dying.

Niko grins wide, like a man receiving a pardon.

NIKO

You're a genius.

The Guard stops next to a large sunken POOL whose crystal waters are used in purification rituals. On the wall, he presses a tile beside an etching of APOLLO, triggering a hidden mechanism.

The SOUNDS of shifting weights and counterbalances rumble from beneath the floor as the water drains from the pool.

Then, the bottom of the pool slides open, revealing a staircase that descends into a DARK TUNNEL.

Perseus, Ammon and Niko stare at the opening, amazed.

GUARD

(off Apollo's image)

Through our prayers, may Apollo guide you.

17.
Ammon descends into the tunnel. Perseus breathes deep and follows. Niko shadows him.

INT. THE TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Ammon leads them. Their torches barely illuminate the timeworn tunnel, its black granite walls absorbing the light, never allowing them to see beyond a few feet ahead.

WATER drips down on them, turning the clay ground into mud, making their progress slow and miserable.

DEEPER IN THE TUNNEL

Moving slow, the tunnel narrows ahead, barely wide enough to slip through. Niko grimaces.

NIKO

We'll be crawling soon.

Ammon slips through the gap. But Perseus stops when he hears a SCRAPING SOUND. He cocks his head, looks behind them.

NIKO

What is it?

Perseus listens a beat longer.

PERSEUS

Nothing.

They follow Ammon, discovering that the tunnel opens up on --

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE NARROW GAP

They stretch to their full heights, relieved.

But the mood darkens when they hear the movement of Calabus' army above them: the pounding of hooves and the clang of repositioning troops.

AMMON

We're below the battlefield now.

The tunnel creaks as its rotted crossbeams bow under the pressure of the enemy troops above, threatening to collapse.

A stream of dirt, like sand from an hourglass, spills onto Perseus. They're not out of danger yet.

PERSEUS

Let's move, before this place becomes our grave.

They continue on, the ever-present vibrations of the enemy above keeps the tension high. Ammon ducks beneath another stressing crossbeam, the earth above yearning to give way.

Another scraping sound. Perseus stops, looking back. Niko's eyes trail after his.

NIKO
It's probably rats.

Then from above, the HACKING OF SPADES tear at the earth.

PERSEUS
They're digging beneath the blockade.

A heavy realization crosses Ammon's face.

AMMON
They find this tunnel and the city falls.

Ammon's eyes shift to the straining CROSSBEAM behind them - rotted and weak - it barely supports the topsoil's weight.

AMMON
We take out that beam and the tunnel collapses.

PERSEUS
And we bury ourselves along with it.
(holding an odd stare with Ammon)
We keep moving.

Ammon nods. Niko starts off. Ammon and Perseus behind him.

We STAY at this point, which falls into darkness. After a beat, ANOTHER TORCH appears from the direction of the palace.

A SHROUDED FIGURE steps into view, passing under the weakened beam. This was the source of the scraping sound.

As the figure turns a corner, a SWORD appears from the darkness, its tip resting on the figure's chest.

PERSEUS steps from the shadows, sword in hand, flanked by Ammon and Niko. We realize they were lying in wait.

PERSEUS
Who are you?

A WOMAN'S VOICE
Your Princess.

The FIGURE throws back the shroud, revealing --

ANDROMEDA, her hair pulled back by a white scarf. Her eyes are cold and determined. Perseus lowers his blade.

Ammon sighs deeply. A dark look crosses Niko's face.

PERSEUS

Why are you here?

ANDROMEDA

To make certain you fulfill your duty.
I'm going with you.

PERSEUS

No... You're going back.

ANDROMEDA

I won't leave Phoenicia's fate in the
hands of a conscript.

PERSEUS

And I won't be responsible for a woman.

Suddenly, DIRT cascades into the tunnel as two of CALABUS' SOLDIERS break through the ceiling.

The group freezes, caught off-guard. Perseus recovers first.

PERSEUS

Go!

Ammon and Niko take off down the tunnel as the two soldiers brandish their weapons, eager for blood.

Perseus draws his sword back and HEAVES it into the CROSSBEAM. The impact knocks the weakened beam loose, creating a FISSURE that spiderwebs across the ceiling.

The soldiers watch in shock as the fissure rushes towards them. They abandon the chase. But they're too slow, quickly buried by THE AVALANCHE.

PERSEUS and Andromeda race ahead of the COLLAPSING CEILING, which bears down on them like an upside down TIDAL WAVE of earth and soil.

Perseus stumbles, barely recovering as the debris rushes towards them, taking out crossbeam after crossbeam, gaining momentum as they run towards Ammon's torch.

The cave-in comes closer, gaining fast, only a foot behind them. Just as it's about to crush them, they LEAP past the next crossbeam, which strains under the weight of the collapsing rock, but holds strong.

Dust rains down as the cave-in subsides. Perseus pulls himself from the ground as Andromeda stands to face him.

ANDROMEDA

Like I said. I'm not going back.

BACK IN THE COLLAPSED SECTION

The two soldiers free themselves from the rubble.

Soldier #1 spies a WHITE SCARF amid the debris. He picks it up - the ROYAL CREST clearly visible.

EXT. CALABUS' ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

BONFIRES make boulevards amid an army of tents. MENACING FIGURES hunch over fires, sharpening swords, repairing armor.

Soldier #1 carries Andromeda's scarf through the makeshift city where everything from blacksmiths to woodworkers craft and build items for one purpose: killing men.

INT. CALABUS' TENT - NIGHT

An ominous place dominated by a large statue of Hera. The interior is littered with vases, tapestries, gold - the bounty from endless conquests throughout the known world.

SERVANTS remove an armored chest plate from a HUGE MAN, revealing a body riddled with scars and muscles. We know this man. We've felt his energy before - CALABUS. His face remains hidden behind a black metal mask.

Soldier #1 enters and presents Calabus with the scarf. He rubs his finger across the royal crest.

CALABUS

(whispers to himself)

Andromeda.

(to the soldier)

Where did you find it?

SOLDIER #1

A tunnel beneath the battlefield. Two commoners and an officer were with her.

CALABUS

Send my personal guard. Fifty darics for the man who brings her to me.

A VOICE (O.S.)
You must go yourself.

Calabus turns to find KADMUS, his dark oracle. A tall, lithe man who carries a staff made of human bone. He circles Calabus, a scowl upon his face.

KADMUS (CONT'D)
There is a new threat to your designs.
Another has entered the fray. One who
might soon alter Andromeda's destiny.

CALABUS
Who is this other?

KADMUS
A non-believer. But his will is strong.
If she survives, History turns, and not
in your favor.

CALABUS
You're certain?

KADMUS
She must die.
(beat)
Hera has revealed this.

Calabus stares up at the statue of Hera.

CALABUS
Leave.

Calabus looks back, but Kadmus is already gone. He then faces the Soldier, eyes burning from behind his mask.

CALABUS
Ready my horse.

CUT TO:

EXT. REAR OF CALABUS' ARMY - NIGHT

Perseus emerges from behind a cluster of ROCKS. Ammon, Niko, and Andromeda join him, peering out at the rear staging area for Calabus' cavalry.

AT THE HORSES' PADDOCK

Perseus and Niko slip into the paddock. A SENTRY passes and they freeze. Once he's gone, they take four horses.

EXT. PLAINS - NIGHT

Perseus and the others ride hard across a devastated landscape, leaving Phoenicia and Calabus' army behind.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PALACE - NIGHT

Cassiopeia moves down a long hallway. She pauses at a door, knocks, no answer. She walks into --

ANDROMEDA'S BEDROOM

A few candles flicker, but it's empty. Suddenly, a strange mix of fear and sickness crosses the Queen's face. She rushes from the bedroom, and enters --

A PARLOR

A HANDMAIDEN stands by a bureau. She lowers her eyes when the Queen enters. Cassiopeia walks closer, spying an envelope on the bureau. Written on it: *Mother*.

CASSIOPEIA
Where is she?

HANDMAIDEN
Gone.

Devastation surfaces upon Cassiopeia's face as we --

DISSOLVE TO:

SWIRLING STORM CLOUDS... ANDROMEDA'S VOICE WITHIN THEM...

ANDROMEDA (V.O.)
I call witness to the River, and the Daughters of the night. Hear my words Diana, and bind them to your will. Our lives we will give, but hope we will never part with.

EXT. ANCIENT BURIAL MOUNDS - NIGHT

Andromeda finishes her prayer beside a small stream of water.

ANDROMEDA
... Never shall I part with hope.

Behind her the group has made camp among a series of burial mounds cleaved into the lowlands of the mountains. Some have shrines, others statues or monuments adorning them.

A small fire burns. Perseus cooks stew in a pot. Ammon and Niko stare at the fire, a strong wind flapping the flames.

Andromeda joins them, a tension filling the air.

ANDROMEDA
We should be riding on.

AMMON
The horses must rest. Prayers alone
won't get us to Stygian.

NIKO
Prayers won't get us anywhere.

ANDROMEDA
They've gotten us this far.

Perseus looks around. They're miles outside a dying city.
In all directions, the earth has been scorched to the bone.

PERSEUS
If this is where prayers have brought us,
then for all our sake, stop praying.

Andromeda bristles.

ANDROMEDA
You mock the gods at your own peril.

PERSEUS
These gods of yours. Where were they
when Calabus sieged Phoenicia?

She has no answer. Perseus feeds another log to the fire,
causing embers to burst into the night sky.

Ammon grabs the satchel of wine. Opens it, drinks deep.

ANDROMEDA
(to Ammon)
How long have you been a guide?

NIKO
He's not a guide. He's a drunk.

AMMON
Occupational hazard. I own a tavern.

ANDROMEDA
(to Perseus, angry)
You were told to find a guide.

PERSEUS
Ammon will get us there.

Andromeda's eyes pierce. Perseus ignores her. He takes out the parchment, turning it over in his hands, thinking.

PERSEUS
What do you know of the Fates, Ammon?

AMMON
It's said they have powers. That they are the weavers of destiny; that they see all that is and all that will be.

Ammon pauses, his mind considering something.

AMMON
And that no one who has ever entered their temple, has lived to tell of it.

ANDROMEDA
There is a way. A riddle. If one finds the answer, one escapes with their life.

A quiet hangs over them until Niko starts laughing.

NIKO
Listen to yourselves. Witches who know the future. Riddles to best them. Nothing but hearth tales meant for children.
(looks to Perseus)
What do you think, Perseus?

Perseus shares a look with everyone.

PERSEUS
I think the stew is ready.

Perseus serves Andromeda first. She takes a bite and spits it out, disgusted.

ANDROMEDA
What is this?

PERSEUS
Think of it as pheasant.

ANDROMEDA
How can I think of swill as pheasant?

PERSEUS

Eat or go hungry. Not all of us are
blessed with options.

Andromeda stands, throwing her stew to the ground.

ANDROMEDA

Who are you to speak to me that way? You
are my servant.

PERSEUS

I'm no one's servant. And out here
Princess, you're just another girl.

She turns and walks off without another word.

EXT. BURIAL MOUNDS - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

The fire burns. Ammon and Andromeda sleep nearby. Perseus
sits a short distance away on a toppled gravestone, examining
the parchment. Niko emerges from the shadows, pack in hand.

NIKO

(low voice, conspiratorial)

You ready?

Perseus nods, yes. Niko moves to his horse.

Perseus lays the parchment on the column, leaving it where
Ammon can find it. He quietly moves to his horse.

AMMON

No farewell?

Perseus and Niko turn to find Ammon. Perseus hardens.

PERSEUS

What's to be said? We've escaped with
our lives. Now we part ways.

AMMON

What of your duty?

PERSEUS

Phoenicia's fate is settled. There's
nothing anyone can do now.

AMMON

This road has been put before you,
Perseus. You must travel it.

PERSEUS

I'm sorry. I'm not the one to do this.

ANDROMEDA (O.S.)

But you're the one who said you would.

Andromeda appears from the shadows.

PERSEUS

I'm no fool, Princess. The commanders only agreed to this to appease the Queen. They see what you can't - that this is a fool's errand.

ANDROMEDA

They see nothing!

PERSEUS

They see the reality of defeat.

(leveled)

It's you who are blind.

Andromeda walks closer.

ANDROMEDA

You're a soldier. You gave your word. To your Queen. To your city.

PERSEUS

I'm no soldier. I'm only a conscript, just as you said.

Andromeda's eyes set.

ANDROMEDA

I knew what you were from the moment I saw you... a lying, dishonorable, coward.

Her words hit hard. Perseus grows cold.

PERSEUS

If you were a man, you'd be dead.

ANDROMEDA

If you were a man, you'd keep your word.

A beat as they hold one another's stare. Finally, Perseus picks the parchment back up.

PERSEUS

My word was to get their answer, not bring it back.

(beat)

(MORE)

PERSEUS (CONT'D)
I'll take you, Princess. But from
Stygian, Niko and I go our own way.

Perseus walks off. Niko fumes, his eyes flashing hate at the Princess. She doesn't waver.

EXT. BURIAL MOUNDS - DAWN

Perseus watches the sun rise. Ammon, Niko, and Andromeda ready their horses a short distance away.

As Perseus turns, he sees a flash of MOVEMENT amidst the tombs. He draws his sword, angling toward the MOUNDS.

Perseus sees a SHADOW ahead, weaving between the graves towards a tomb with an arched entrance in the distance.

Perseus follows, seeing glimpses of the shadow, but never able to catch up to it.

Finally, the tomb looms around the next corner. Perseus pauses, then swings around the mound, sword ready, but --

No one is there. The trail dead ends at a sealed crypt before which stands an aged statue of ZEUS.

At the foot of the statue, sunlight reflects off of a SWORD, its blade sunk halfway into the earth. Each side is etched with PICTOGRAMS in some ancient form of writing.

Perseus grabs hold of the handle, pulling hard, but it doesn't budge. He grips it tighter, straining to free the sword from the earth. Still nothing. Then --

A SHADOW falls over him.

Perseus whips around, the sword instantly comes free. He holds it up high, defensively, only to find --

Niko standing above him.

NIKO
Ammon is ready.

Perseus eases, lowering the blade.

BACK AT CAMP

Perseus and Niko approach Ammon, the friction between them all still palpable. Ammon notices the sword.

AMMON
Where'd you find it?

PERSEUS

Among the mounds. Do you recognize the writing?

Ammon takes the sword, looking at the pictograms.

AMMON

The etchings of the immortals. I doubt anyone living can read it.

(hands it back)

A gift from the gods.

NIKO

More likely some fool's offering to the dead.

Then Niko freezes, eyes locked on the distance. Everyone follows his gaze. From their elevated position, they see -- EIGHT RIDERS upon the far-off horizon.

ANDROMEDA

Who are they?

Ammon pales. The rider's dull black armor is unmistakable.

AMMON

Calabus.

NIKO

It can't be.

PERSEUS

It is.

Perseus mounts his horse. Ammon stops him.

AMMON

They're skilled riders, Perseus. We won't outrun them. We should take to the hills.

Perseus looks back to the riders, then to Ammon, torn.

SMASH TO:

CALABUS AND HIS MEN...

ride hard through dense forest. Visible ahead, shrouded in a cloud of dust, FOUR HORSES weave between the trees.

Calabus urges his men on. Their steeds will soon overtake the fleeing horses, which crest a ridge, vanishing from view.

Calabus takes the lead, pushing harder. When he tops the ridge, he pulls his horse to a sudden stop. His men come to a halt beside him. Calabus' eyes burn with rage.

IN THE DISTANCE, we see the source of his displeasure:

Perseus and the others' HORSES drink from a stream,
RIDERLESS.

Kadmus dismounts, walks to the horses some twenty feet away. He stares into the distance, silent.

BARENEA, a brute driven by hate and bloodlust, pulls beside Calabus. His black armor is stained with dried blood.

BARENEA

Their packs are gone.

CALABUS

I have eyes.

Barenea stays silent. Better to let Calabus speak. Calabus stares at Kadmus in the distance, silent, unmoving. Then Calabus looks back to Barenea.

CALABUS

They went into the hills, back at the burial mounds. They'll head north to -

KADMUS (O.S.)

Stygian.

Inexplicably, Kadmus now stands next to Calabus' horse. Barenea shudders - the powerful oracle makes him uneasy.

KADMUS (CONT'D)

They carry with them a question, one whose answer sparks a destiny at odds with your own.

Calabus looks into the sun, eyes reflecting its intensity.

CALABUS

There is only one place they will go in Stygian.

Kadmus smiles. Then Calabus rears his horse and races back in the direction of the burial mounds.

BACK TO:

EXT. THE HILLS - DAY

The steep hills have become mountains. A light rain falls as Perseus and the others ascend a goat path hacked into the mountainside, its edge perilously close to the cliff's - a two-thousand-foot drop to the valley below.

NIKO

Do you think they followed the horses?

AMMON

Yes. But they'll soon discover their mistake.

A tense moment passes between them.

AMMON

Let's keep moving. We linger long and we'll find ourselves on Charon's boat.

Ammon walks ahead, Andromeda sticking close to him. Niko moves beside Perseus, his eyes trail after the Princess.

NIKO

She's poison. It's she that Calabus wants.

Perseus says nothing.

NIKO

We should leave her to him.

The rain begins to fall harder, biting at them like gnats.

PERSEUS

At Stygian we go our own way. We leave then with a clear conscience.

NIKO

My conscience is clear. It's yours that has brought us here.

Niko walks ahead, angered.

FURTHER UP THE MOUNTAIN

The rain has given way to a light mist. The group passes through a grove of barren fig trees, their twisted limbs resembling tortured souls.

As Perseus walks, he holds his sword in one hand, twirling it, stabbing, growing accustomed to its weight and balance.

Ammon walks behind him, scowling.

AMMON

You were always a poor student. Handle it properly.

PERSEUS

Like this, old man?

Perseus pivots towards a fig tree, striking a limb on the left, one on the right, then stabs the trunk in one quick motion. Each blow takes a sizable chunk from the tree.

Ammon is not impressed.

AMMON

No.

Ammon takes the sword from Perseus.

AMMON

Like this.

Lightning fast, Ammon swings the blade at the tree, cutting the left and right limbs completely off.

Perseus angers at being shown up.

PERSEUS

I've never had a problem with the way I fight.

AMMON

You've never fought anyone worth fighting.

Ammon swings again, striking the tree in its center, splitting it in half. It almost seems impossible.

AMMON

Learn from me or learn from Calabus.

(beat)

Either way, learn or you die.

Ammon spears the sword into the ground between Perseus' feet. Then he turns and continues towards the mountain peaks.

EXT. STYGIAN MOUNTAINS - DAY

The group climbs over a hill and stops. They stand silent, facing something O.S.. We pull back to reveal --

THE TEMPLE OF THE FATES

Ancient. Made of stone that looks eons old. The structure appears to have been carved out of the side of the mountain, or birthed from it.

Its ENTRANCE is flanked on either side by two thick monoliths with sloping bases, squatting toad-like and malevolent. They are connected at the top by an ARCH. Carved into it is an inscription: *DecArpus Axani Terreas Iliiate doupula'i.*

ANDROMEDA

(translating)

Name me and you destroy me, but you need me to live.

NIKO

The Fates' riddle... ?

AMMON

Yes.

NIKO

Maybe we can just leave the parchment and come back for the answer.

They all give Niko a look.

AMMON

It doesn't work that way. We go in.

INT. TEMPLE - MINUTES LATER

Perseus leads the others down a stone corridor. Aged steps descend into darkness. SCORPIONS scatter into the cracks on the moss-covered walls. The darkness only broken by mounted WAX CANDLES.

ANDROMEDA

Name me and you destroy me, but you need me to live... Have you any ideas?

AMMON

None.

NIKO

It's meaningless. Only a puzzle meant to intimidate fools.

But the others aren't so sure. Perseus grabs a candle from the wall, which we see are covered with ETCHINGS:

PROMETHEUS giving fire to man, then being bound to a tree as reprisal, unable to defend himself as vultures rip him apart; PANDORA opening a box, unleashing evil upon the world; The KRAKEN, a huge sea creature, emerges from the ocean when a bolt of gold lightning explodes from the heavens to stop it.

The flickering candles cast shadows that make each carving appear to come to life. Perseus stares at them, transfixed.

PERSEUS

It's more than a riddle. It's a warning.

Perseus holds his candle up, revealing --

ANOTHER ETCHING depicting THREE MEN and a long-haired WOMAN walking through a corridor exactly like the one they're walking through. At the corridor's end, the figures blindly walk off a cliff.

Everyone turns, staring down to the end of the dark corridor.

NIKO

(off the corridor)

I have a suggestion. Let's not walk through there.

WAX drips onto Perseus' hand. He stares at the wax, rubbing it between his fingers. He has an epiphany.

PERSEUS

From here, Niko and I go alone.

ANDROMEDA

Alone? The Fates will want to speak with royalty, not a conscript.

NIKO

Listen to the Princess. Let her go.

PERSEUS

(to Andromeda)

The Fates will want to speak with no one. That I'm sure of. If you want your answer, you'll wait here.

Andromeda fumes as Perseus leads a reluctant Niko forward.

AT THE END OF THE CORRIDOR

Perseus and Niko stand in a hollow cavern. As their eyes adjust, they see a staircase before them spiraling down, corkscrewing into the bowels of the mountain.

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRCASE

Perseus and Niko reach the end of the stairs to find --

A TOWERING DOOR, twenty feet high, ten wide, and intricately chiseled with IMAGES of the GODS. Perseus' candle throws an ominous glow over the immortals, whose realistic visages stare down at them in silent judgement.

NIKO

Perseus?

PERSEUS

Yes.

NIKO

Now'd be a good time to tell me the plan.

Perseus pulls the candle to his face, blows it out. Darkness enshrouds them.

INT. THE CORRIDOR - SAME

Ammon sits on the ground, takes out his pipe. Andromeda plays with her necklace as she paces back and forth.

ANDROMEDA

We should have gone with them.

AMMON

We're right where we're supposed to be.
There's nothing to do but wait.

(lights his pipe)
Find a way to pass the time.

ANDROMEDA

Ladies don't smoke pipes, old man.

AMMON

The ladies I know do.

ANDROMEDA

I'm sure it'd be a stretch to call any woman you know a lady.

Andromeda again rubs the necklace. Her eyes hold on the image of her father stamped at the coin's center.

AMMON

(off necklace)

He was a good man, your father. He cared about Phoenicia. Made life better for all those who lived within her walls.

Andromeda's eyes soften for a moment.

ANDROMEDA
You're a bit wiser than I thought.

AMMON
Why did you come out here, Princess?
It's not exactly a safe place to be.

ANDROMEDA
Neither is Phoenicia.

Ammon is silent. She knows he's searching for more.

ANDROMEDA
The Goddess was silent to my prayers, so
I lit laurels to Zeus asking for a sign.
Then the Oracle spoke of the Fates. I
knew that was his answer.

AMMON
And you really think the answer is here?

ANDROMEDA
Don't you?

AMMON
No. I think here is where the questions
really begin.

BACK TO:

THE TOWERING DOOR - SAME

A candle lies on the ground spilling hot wax. Perseus tosses
his lucky coin to Niko.

PERSEUS
For luck.

Niko nods. As Perseus reaches to knock, the door swings
inward, moved by some unseen force, revealing --

INT. CHAMBER OF THE FATES - CONTINUOUS

A huge, limitless chamber. There is no back wall or ceiling
to this place, only an endless void of blackness.

The chamber is dominated by a BOUNDLESS TAPESTRY - a
spiderweb of intertwining threads that stretch into infinity -
each thread representing a life. THREE SISTERS weave the
tapestry like three spiders spinning a web:

CLOTHO (8), sits at an old wooden SPINNING WHEEL.

Her sister LACHESIS (35), is stunning with long black hair and intense green eyes. Lachesis gathers the threads, cuts them to different lengths, then hands them to --

ATROPOS (70), ghostly and silent, pale as larva. Atropos weaves the threads into the tapestry.

But what is most unsettling is that the room is void of all sound. It's like being in the vacuum of space.

Perseus unseals the parchment. He reads it, a confused look on his face. He breaks the silence, asking the question --

PERSEUS

How can one man defeat an army?

The sisters look up as all b.g. sounds return, booming with intensity. Clotho, a child with the poise and grace of a grown woman, speaks first.

CLOTHO

Leave now with your life, Perseus. No one leaves with their answer.

He shudders when Clotho says his name, but he doesn't move. Lachesis steps forward, green eyes radiant in the dim light.

LACHESIS

One man could never defeat an army. For that, you'd need the power of a God.

ATROPOS

Or something greater - a Titan.

Perseus listens intently. Niko has no reaction at all.

ATROPOS

Medusa is the one you seek. A mortal cursed for her vanity so that anyone who looks upon her is turned to stone.

(beat)

But to gain her help, you'll have to take her head.

PERSEUS

Medusa? I thought Medusa was the stuff of myth?

CLOTHO

No. Medusa is the stuff of death.

The Fates turn cold and menacing.

ATROPOS

We've answered your question. Now you
pay with your life.

Perseus goes for his sword, but he can't move, suddenly
paralyzed by some unseen force. Then we --

FLASH TO A BLACK RIVER

Perseus finds himself in a turbulent river, its dark waters
thick and black, like crude oil.

He tries to swim, but pale, dead HANDS reach up from the
currents, pulling him under. His lungs fill as he struggles
to break free.

BACK TO THE FATES

Perseus falls to his knees, suffocating, ravaged by some
unseen power.

Niko stands beside him, immobile. Lachesis approaches him,
not understanding why he isn't also in the throes of death.

FLASH TO THE RIVER

Perseus sinks into the raging river. A dozen arms cling to
him, pulling him deeper.

BACK TO THE FATES

Perseus writhes on the ground, the fight leaving him.

As Lachesis reaches Niko, he suddenly moves, lunging for
Perseus' sword. Before the sisters can react, Niko has
Lachesis in his grasp, sword across her throat.

NIKO

Release him!

ATROPOS

Drop the sword.

But Niko is free of their spell. They can't control him.

NIKO

Release him or I kill her now!

Perseus lies still, his breathing stopped. A tense moment.
Finally, Atropos acquiesces. She waves her hand and --

Perseus is free of their control, gasping for breath. He regains his senses, disoriented from the ordeal.

CLOTHO
(off Niko)
Tell him to free her.

PERSEUS
(speaking in gasps)
Agree to let us live.

ATROPOS
You've earned that right, but it matters little. Your days are few.

Perseus nods to Niko, who reluctantly releases Lachesis.

PERSEUS
What do you mean?

ATROPOS
Man stands at a precipice, Perseus. If Phoenicia falls, humanity falls with her.

Lachesis moves to the edge of the tapestry where we see a tremendous KNOT. Every life thread leads to this point and STOPS - beyond which the tapestry doesn't continue.

LACHESIS
Each thread is a life. Each life a part of the pattern. You knot the tapestry, Perseus. Only you can free it.
(beat)
Do you understand what you must do?

PERSEUS
What I must do? I only came for your answer.

ATROPOS
You are the answer.
(beat)
It's you who must stop Calabus.

Perseus' eyes grow fearful as a quiet awakening brews within.

PERSEUS
No... I don't want this... I didn't ask for it....

ATROPOS
If you turn from your moira, every death in Phoenicia weighs against your soul.

The colossal door begins to close. Clotho, the child, falls into a trance.

CLOTHO

What creates thunder, but not rain? What swims through air, but not water? Solve this and cross the Styx.

Perseus and Niko back out of the doorway.

LACHESIS

Make of your destiny what you will.

Perseus and Niko barely make it out before the door slams closed, its CLANG echoing through the endless cavern.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Andromeda and Ammon wait. She jumps up when she sees Perseus and Niko emerge from the dark void.

ANDROMEDA

Did you see them?

Perseus is shaken, unable to understand what just happened.

PERSEUS

... Medusa. Her severed head can stop Calabus.

Andromeda turns pale.

ANDROMEDA

Medusa? ... That's impossible?

PERSEUS

You believe in gods, why not the Fates?

ANDROMEDA

It's you I don't believe in.

PERSEUS

Medusa was their answer.

As Andromeda internalizes this, we PAN UP to the ceiling. Suspended across its width, staring down at them, is --

KADMUS. The dark oracle defies gravity as he listens to the threesome, who are completely unaware of his presence.

ANDROMEDA turns to Ammon.

ANDROMEDA
I assume you'll still take me back?

Ammon nods, yes. Niko pulls wax from his ears. Ammon notices, intrigued.

AMMON
(off the wax)
Name me and you destroy me... Silence.

PERSEUS
It's silence you destroy by naming it.
One of us had to preserve silence to
survive.

AMMON
How clever.

NIKO
(impatient)
Very. Now, can we leave?

Niko walks off, eager to leave. Ammon holds a beat, sensing something. He looks up to the ceiling, but no one is there. Kadmus has disappeared.

EXT. TEMPLE OF THE FATES - NIGHT

A dark night with only a sliver of moon. Niko exits the stone entrance ahead of the others and --

WHAM! He's struck across the face. He falls, dropping Perseus' COIN clutched in his fist.

THICK HANDS pull him away. They belong to -- BARENEA, flanked by four WARRIORS. Calabus is nowhere in sight.

BARENEA
Remember his command.

INT. TEMPLE - SAME

Perseus, Andromeda, and Ammon ascend the stone steps. When they near the exit, Perseus stops, alert.

ANDROMEDA
What's wrong?

Perseus motions to something on the ground: his lucky coin. Perseus draws his sword, as does Ammon.

As they cautiously emerge from the entrance, CALABUS' WARRIORS ATTACK. *Everything happens fast.*

PERSEUS is isolated by two Warriors, fighting for his life.

BARENEA approaches Andromeda. Ammon steps between them.

AMMON
Stand aside, heathen.

As if to answer, Barenea swings his sword. Ammon blocks it. Sparks fly. In action, Ammon loses thirty years, parrying and thrusting with the grace of a man half his age.

PERSEUS battles with vigor, leading the fight to the surrounding pillars, dancing a sword's length ahead of death.

A WARRIOR rushes Andromeda, thinking her helpless. Bad move. She pulls a hidden knife, slashing it across his face.

BARENEA knocks Ammon to the ground as a second Warrior joins in, keeping Ammon busy deflecting a series of blows.

ANDROMEDA finds Barenea beside her. As she struggles to escape his grasp, her hairpin comes loose. Fast as a snake, Barenea grabs her waist-length hair, tying it to the branch of a tree, trapping her where she stands.

NIKO regains consciousness to find PERSEUS fighting two warriors near him. But rather than help, Niko ignores his friend and runs, deserting them.

PERSEUS
Niko... !?

But Niko keeps running, disappearing into the night.

CALABUS' WARRIORS regroup to face Perseus and Ammon. The few wounds they've managed to inflict upon the Warriors are nothing - these men bleed for a living.

Andromeda is still held prisoner by her hair. Barenea moves forward, bringing his sword up.

BARENEA

He's mine.

Barenea charges Perseus just as --

THREE HORSES stampede through the group. Not just any horses - the warrior's MAGNIFICENT STEEDS. Confusion reigns as the lead horse plows over Barenea, knocking him to the ground.

The stampede scatters the Warriors as we realize Niko is riding the lead horse.

NIKO

Come on!

PERSEUS leaps onto a horse, as does Ammon. As Calabus' men recover, Perseus steers his mount toward Andromeda.

He rides at her fast, raising his sword. He slams his blade across her hair, chopping off a section to free her. Perseus pulls her onto his mount.

In that instant, Andromeda looks at Perseus differently, as if seeing him for the first time. The moment is broken as Perseus spurs his horse forward.

Barenea pulls himself from the ground, armor covered in mud, dented by hooves. He watches with hate as they gallop away. He spits on the ground, whispering a curse.

Then -- CALABUS rides his steed from behind a monstrous stone pillar. Kadmus by his side. They were there the whole time.

CALABUS' WARRIORS bow on one knee, holding their weighty swords before them, tips to the ground, like crosses.

BARENEA

We should have slaughtered them. Why let them escape?

Beneath his mask, Calabus remains impassive, deep in thought.

KADMUS

They have not escaped, Barenea. They are now fish on a hook.

BARENEA

But to what end?

Calabus' eyes narrow. His sharp, yellow teeth flash a grin.

CALABUS

They will lead us to a power greater than any army, or the gods themselves. They will lead us to the power of a Titan.

Calabus looks down. He sees Perseus' LUCKY COIN lying in the mud just before it disappears beneath his horse's hoof.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGE - DAWN

A chill hangs in the air. Ammon stands on a ridge, his eyes focused upon the landscape ahead. Andromeda readies a horse for the ride back to Phoenicia. Niko divides their supplies.

Perseus approaches Ammon, who remains silent.

PERSEUS

Something is bothering you. The whole ride here. I could see it on your face.

Ammon's eyes are drawn to the distance.

AMMON

I know the difference between blows meant to kill and those meant to scare. His men let us escape.

For a moment, Perseus' confidence is shaken.

PERSEUS

Why? Why let us go free?

AMMON

They see something we don't.

Andromeda approaches Perseus, breaking the moment.

ANDROMEDA

You haven't changed your mind, I assume?

PERSEUS

No. I won't be going back.

NIKO

That's the smartest thing you've said in two days.

ANDROMEDA

No matter. Ammon and I will return alone. I'm sure you and Niko will find a home amongst the cowards of this world.

Perseus isn't phased by her insult.

PERSEUS

I'm afraid Ammon won't be joining you either.

(beat)

He's going with us... to find Medusa.

For a moment, no one says a word. Then --

OTTAH

What are you talking about?

ANDROMEDA

What are you talking about?

PERSEUS

I'm going after her.

ANDROMEDA

You? We'll need a legion if we're to have a chance of defeating her.

PERSEUS

There is no legion. And there is no time. The burden rests in our hands now.

The seriousness of Perseus' tone registers with Andromeda. Ammon is steady, as always. Niko has had enough. He grabs his pack, shouldering it.

NIKO

Do as you wish, but do it without me.

PERSEUS

You'd abandon your best friend?

NIKO

You'd get yours killed!?

Perseus offers no response.

NIKO

I have no interest in being a hero. Do you know why? Because heroes suffer and die and get everyone around them killed.

Niko scoops up his supplies in a blanket, shoulders it.

NIKO

Luck be with you.

As he turns towards his horse, a SILK POUCH falls at his feet. He looks up to Andromeda.

ANDROMEDA

Forty darics of gold. It's yours if you go with us.

NIKO

You're all insane. Medusa isn't even real. She's a myth. Nothing more.

ANDROMEDA

Then you have nothing to fear and only gold to gain.

Andromeda motions to the pouch, more wealth than he could steal in five lifetimes.

ANDROMEDA

Do you want it or not?

A long beat. Niko finally picks up the pouch. Perseus locks eyes with him, full of disgust.

PERSEUS
You'd go for gold, but not for me?

Niko holds his stare, then walks off, a deep rift between them.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGE - LATER

Ammon and Niko are ready. Perseus mounts his horse, then reaches an arm out to Andromeda, who doesn't take it.

PERSEUS
It's ride with me or walk.

She relents, taking his hand. He pulls her onto the horse behind him. Perseus looks to Ammon.

PERSEUS
You can find her island?

AMMON
I can try. But it's far, well past the Wastelands, beyond the Forest of Darkness, at the edge of the living world itself.
(beat)
Even if we reach it, we must somehow cross the River Styx.

Perseus remembers Clotho's riddle, repeating it.

PERSEUS
What creates thunder, but not rain? What swims through air, but not water?

ANDROMEDA
What are you talking about?

PERSEUS
The Fates left me this riddle. The answer is the way across the Styx.

ANDROMEDA
I once heard a Bard from Megara describe a bird as 'swimming' through the air.

Ammon's brow crinkles, a thought hits him.

AMMON
It's not a bird we seek.

PERSEUS

Then what?

Ammon rears his horse up, its front legs kick into the sky. When the horse lands, his hooves thunder against the soil.

AMMON

A horse, Perseus. A horse brings thunder but no rain. And only one horse can swim through the air.

(beat)

Pegasus.

CUT TO:

HOOVES THUNDER AGAINST THE EARTH...

EXT. MOUNTAININSIDE - DAY

Their HORSES leap fallen trees; struggle up steep inclines; mile after mile, churning the earth like sledgehammers.

Ammon leads them, focused on the trail. Andromeda rides with Perseus, holding his waist tight. Niko brings up the rear.

They ride into a small valley. Running through the middle of it is a stream. Ammon pulls up.

AMMON

The horses must drink.

THE STREAM

Ammon and Andromeda refill their water satchels. Perseus has worked his way up to a small bluff. He scans the horizon in the direction from which they came.

Nothing, but then, he sees something, perhaps in his mind's eye - a GLOW OF LIGHT in the distance... Death is following them. He shivers, until --

A VOICE

Tell me now.

Perseus swings around to find Niko standing there.

NIKO (CONT'D)

Tell me what else the Fates said.

Perseus takes a beat, letting the question sink in.

PERSEUS

They said that there was no one else. No one left who could stop him.

NIKO

Stop Calabus? Are you serious?

PERSEUS

If not us, who?

NIKO

No one. No one and nothing can stop him. Not your sword, nor Ammon's gods.

Perseus is silent. Niko pulls out the pouch of gold.

NIKO

Forty darics of gold. Enough for us to live the rest of our lives.

(almost pleading)

Enough of this nonsense. Let's leave.

PERSEUS

I can't.

(beat)

We left Phoenicia thinking it was doomed.

NIKO

It is.

PERSEUS

... What if we were wrong?

Anger grows behind Niko's eyes.

NIKO

When did you become such a fool.

He walks off, leaving Perseus alone.

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

The horses ride fast, over hills, pounding through streams, crossing great vistas so wide the horizon seems endless.

Finally, they crest a broken ridge to see a distant MOUNTAIN that towers over the landscape like a shining castle --

MOUNT TROKAS.

It stabs up into the blue sky, its myriad of WATERFALLS, some falling hundreds of feet, glisten in the sun.

AMMON

Mount Trokas. The horse is said to drink from its pools.

ANDROMEDA

It's beautiful.

Perseus looks up to see the sky suddenly darken, turning a malevolent grey. In an instant, Mount Trokas is swallowed by STORM CLOUDS that spread quickly, unnaturally, as if trying to seal the earth from the heavens. The horses grow uneasy.

ANDROMEDA

What's happening... ?

AMMON

(off storm)

The goddess Hera. She sides with Calabus.

NIKO

It's just a storm.

ANDROMEDA

A storm is the voice of an angry god.

The CRACK of THUNDER booms closer. LIGHTNING spider-webs across the sky. It seems a precursor for much worse.

AMMON

We have to get out of this valley. We'll be trapped here if it floods.

Perseus spurs his horse into the storm, Andromeda's arms clutched around him. Ammon and Niko follow.

Sweeping wind engulfs them as they DISAPPEAR into the swirling torrent of rain.

MATCH TO:

THE TORRENT OF BATTLE...

EXT. PHOENICIA - DAY

Phoenicia's front lines are hammered by a mighty push from Calabus' legion. Blood rains through the lines as a roar of thunder approaches.

PHOENICIAN SOLDIERS look up in horror as a wave of ENEMY CAVALRY breaks through the outer blockade. The DARK RIDERS hack through conscripts and officers alike.

CLOSE ON GENERAL RENA

At the center of the melee, Rena leads his personal guard into the widening breach. The hooves of the enemy horses pound like thunder, drowning out all other sounds.

RENA
Hold the line!

Rena rams a spear into an enemy soldier, finishing him off with his sword. But all around him his soldiers are butchered - even his AIDE-DE-CAMP and two COMMANDERS fall.

Rena kills another rider by throwing his sword into his chest. But the onslaught is too much. Rena realizes that the outer blockade will fall. In minutes, they'll be outflanked and overrun.

RENA
Retreat! To the wall!

The order spreads down the line. The Phoenicians pull back as Calabus' army sweeps into them like waves onto a beach.

Rena fights his way through the mayhem, finally passing through the city gates just as they're forced closed. Many others don't make it, swallowed by Calabus' angry horde.

Now, only the GREAT WALL keeps the city alive.

UP IN THE PALACE

Cassiopeia stands on a terrace watching with sadness as the enemy gathers outside the great wall.

She looks out to the horizon at a STORM in the far distance. The Oracle steps beside her.

CASSIOPEIA
How long will the wall hold?

ORACLE
A few days perhaps.

CASSIOPEIA
And my daughter?

ORACLE
The gods are in conflict. The outcome remains unclear.

The Oracle's gaze falls upon the storm in the distance.

ORACLE

She is at the center of the storm. The real battle is there... Her fate and Phoenicia's are now one and the same.

As he speaks, we MOVE IN on the Oracle's EYES until they are all that we can see. Reflected in his milky pupils, we see the distant storm raging... its power growing.

EXT. MOUNT TROKAS - DAY

WIND and RAIN pound Perseus and the others as they reach the base of the mountain. Their horses weave up to a large, ancient BANYAN TREE whose limbs form a canopy, providing protection from the storm.

AMMON

The horses will be safe here.

They dismount and tether their horses to the tree. Perseus looks to the lightning-filled sky, then turns to Ammon.

PERSEUS

(off storm)

Ammon, what makes you believe it's Hera?

AMMON

It's said Calabus is her son.

As rain drips through the tree's limbs, they all move close to Ammon, drawn in by his voice.

AMMON

Legends say Calabus was born a half-God, endowed with super-human strength and abilities. From a young age, he proved an extraordinary hunter.

FLASH TO A WOODED HILLSIDE

As Ammon speaks, we watch a YOUNG CALABUS (8) stand his ground against a charging BOAR twice his size.

Calabus positions himself against a boulder, bracing his spear to it. As the boar reaches him, Calabus angles his spear, using the beast's own momentum to impale it.

AMMON (V.O.)

But his gifts soon became a curse.
Ordinary game presented little challenge.

FLASH TO A SNOW-COVERED VALLEY

CALABUS, now a mature, handsome man, stands ankle-deep in snow. He waits motionless with a bow, staring at the sky.

AMMON (V.O.)

He grew obsessed with hunting the supernatural beasts of the world: harpies, griffins, the winged horses - one by one he drove them to extinction.

Then, something crests a ridge O.S.. We can't see it, but Calabus lets three ARROWS fly in rapid succession. His eyes track something falling from the sky.

AMMON (V.O.)

But with every one he killed, his heart grew darker, his mind more twisted.

Calabus walks over a ridge, passing a plethora of foot-long black feathers scattered upon the white snow.

We hear O.S. the beating of great wings against the earth. We see the quick glint of a HORSE'S DARK EYES, flashing terror, as Calabus raises his bow and fires a final arrow, putting the winged horse out of its misery.

AMMON (V.O.)

When Zeus discovered what he'd done, he cursed Calabus to be disfigured with every injury he'd inflicted upon his beloved creatures.

CALABUS recovers his arrows from the fallen creature, when he's suddenly struck down by some unseen force.

He staggers back. Invisible ARROWS strike him. BLOOD from the wounds seep through his clothes. He falls, screaming. When he lifts his head, his face is disfigured and broken. He crumbles to the ground as all the suffering he's inflicted returns to him at once.

EXT. MOUNT TROKAS - CONTINUOUS

The rain beats upon the banyan tree. Everyone is quiet.

ANDROMEDA

Why didn't Zeus just kill him?

AMMON

Hera used Zeus' belief in man against him.

(MORE)

AMMON (CONT'D)

She challenged him: if he had so much faith in mortals, surely one would rise up to stop Calabus? So his fate was left to this realm.

Thunder booms, as if in response to Ammon's tome.

NIKO

Then tell me this, old man: if Calabus is protected by a God, and immune from the wrath of another, what chance do mortals have of stopping him?

Ammon's eyes are heavy with thought.

AMMON

Next to none.

Ammon lifts his pack and breaks from the cover of the tree, hiking up a trail that winds its way up the towering cliffs.

FURTHER UP THE MOUNTAIN

Raging WATERFALLS erode the rock face, causing mudslides. Perseus leads the group with a rope tied around his waist, as they claw their way up the trail, wet and cold.

As they climb, a large BOULDER comes free ABOVE them. The boulder SLAMS down the mountain, barely missing them.

As WE FOLLOW the tumbling rock down, we realize they're at least a mile up.

EXT. MOUNT TROKAS - NIGHT

Perseus pulls himself over a ledge, breaking through a layer of clouds. He's now ABOVE THE STORM. Looking down, it looks like a brewing cauldron. The others join him, feeling like they've reached the top of the world.

AHEAD OF THEM are a series of pools nestled into a slope of green grass, the mountain tapering down from a snow white peak. It's like something out of a dream.

HOURS LATER

A FULL MOON hangs over this magical place, its glow reflecting off the surface of the tranquil pools.

A FIRE burns. Nearby, Andromeda, clad in a silk undershirt, tries to work out the knots in her hair.

At the fire, Perseus hangs his shirt from a stick, hoping to dry it. Niko approaches him.

NIKO

Are we going to just sit around until
Calabus shows up?

PERSEUS

We wait here.

Niko and he hold a moment, the tension between them thick.

AT A LEDGE

Ammon sits on a ledge overlooking the churning storm. Lightning flashes, reflecting up through the clouds on his wrinkled brow. He looks eons old. Perseus joins him.

PERSEUS

(off storm)

At least we're clear of it.

AMMON

We're clear of nothing. From here,
things will turn worse.

Perseus' focus is drawn to the swirling storm below.

PERSEUS' POV

As the storm churns over the landscape, his vision seems to pierce it, focused on something *beneath* the storm itself. A *SMALL GLOW* of light - the same light he saw earlier.

AMMON

What do you see?

Perseus snaps back.

PERSEUS

... He's coming.

Ammon looks down into the storm.

AMMON

You see him?

PERSEUS

I see a light... I can't explain it.

AMMON

Try.

Perseus pauses, searching for the words.

PERSEUS

On the battlefield... it was chaos, madness. In the mayhem I saw an arrow... it glowed, stood out from everything else. I moved to the side...

(guilt)

It killed another man.

Ammon nods, understanding.

AMMON

When death seeks you out, everything else pales. All that matters is what will kill you. A great warrior can see his death before it reaches him.

(beat)

It is how he achieves his moira.

PERSEUS

Moira? The Fates used that word.

AMMON

Moira is the finished shape of one's destiny, the level to which we've embraced what the gods have asked of us.

Perseus takes this in, thinking. Then --

PERSEUS

Do you see it, Ammon. Do you see death when it comes?

AMMON

Yes.

Ammon looks back to the storm below.

AMMON

And it comes, Perseus... from all sides.

Ammon falls silent. Perseus stands. Out of the corner of his eye, he catches Andromeda watching them. She quickly looks away, feigning disinterest.

PERSEUS

(off Andromeda)

She's not what I expected.

AMMON

Nothing is.

LATER - BY THE FIRE

Ammon sits in silent prayer at the ledge. Niko leans against a rock outcropping, resting his eyes.

Perseus examines his sword, fascinated by its strange etchings and the beauty of its curves.

Then a shadow falls over him -- Andromeda. She pulls a long, thin IVORY PIN from her hair, causing it to spill over her shoulders. There's an obvious chunk missing where Perseus cut her from the tree.

ANDROMEDA

(off hair)

You need to finish the job. In another fight, it might get me killed.

PERSEUS

Hairstyles aren't my strong suit.

ANDROMEDA

I've noticed.

She offers a subtle grin, the tension between them easing.

ANDROMEDA

Please.

She sits down on a rock. Perseus steps behind her, hesitant.

ANDROMEDA

My mother always said that if a woman cuts her hair, she's common.

Perseus takes out his knife, running his fingers through her hair, clearing it of knots.

PERSEUS

Here's to being common.

He begins to slice away her wavy locks. As he cuts each section, the moment takes on an unexpected intimacy.

Andromeda notices the two distinct SCARS on his forearms. She brushes her hand across one of them.

ANDROMEDA

How did you get these?

PERSEUS

I don't know. I've had them since I was a boy.

ANDROMEDA

Your family never told you what happened?

PERSEUS

I have no family. I was an orphan, found at sea by a fisherman.

FLASHBACK - EXT. A WIDE OCEAN - DAY

A YOUNG PERSEUS (5) clings to a tree trunk. From his POV: a FISHERMAN leans over the side of a boat, pulling him aboard. All Perseus can focus on are the fisherman's eyes, which are an intense, unreal yellow.

PERSEUS (V.O.)

All I remember are his eyes. So piercing. Like the sun was behind them.

BACK TO SCENE

ANDROMEDA

What happened to him?

PERSEUS

He left me on the docks. I never saw him again.

Perseus moves in front of Andromeda, looking past her face to measure the proper length of hair to be cut.

PERSEUS

Can I ask you something?

She nods, yes.

PERSEUS

Calabus. It's you he's after, isn't it? He wants you for his bride?

ANDROMEDA

It's not my hand he wants, it's my death.

This stops Perseus, startled by the bluntness of her statement. Andromeda continues.

ANDROMEDA

There was a prophecy that told my child would be the first in a line of kings, a line that would bring an era of light to this world.

(beat)

Calabus believes my death ensures his victory.

PERSEUS

That's why you left, knowing he'd follow.
Hoping he'd spare Phoenicia?

Her silence answers, yes. A new respect for the Princess shows in his eyes.

PERSEUS

You were brave to have done so.

ANDROMEDA

Brave? No. I'm afraid... terrified.

Andromeda pushes back tears. Perseus notices, affected.

PERSEUS

You'll survive this. You'll marry. And you'll have your child.

Andromeda wants to believe him, but she doesn't. Perseus finishes, cutting off the last strand hair.

ANDROMEDA

How does it look?

Andromeda faces him. Her hair hangs at her shoulders.

PERSEUS

You look radiant, Princess.

An awkward moment as their eyes connect for the first time.

ANDROMEDA

Andromeda... my name is Andromeda.

But the moment is broken as an unnatural WIND pushes into them, kicking up dust and debris.

Then, a BOOMING, BRAYING sound echoes from the pools. Perseus and Andromeda look to the distance to see --

A MAJESTIC WHITE STALLION drinking from the silvery water.

The horse has a thick neck, powerful shoulders, and a flowing white mane. On his sides are feathered WINGS tucked close to his body. The wings seem too small to be functional.

This is PEGASUS.

PERSEUS stares in awe. Niko moves slowly to Perseus' side, afraid to spook the horse.

NIKO

It can't be. There is no such thing.

AMMON

Eyes don't lie.

BACK ON PEGASUS

The horse slowly leans over a silvery pool, mesmerized.

His REFLECTION stares back. Pegasus snorts, leans down to the water, touching his reflection nose-to-nose. As his snout breaks the surface, his IMAGE disappears into ripples.

Pegasus stomps his mighty hooves on the pool's surface, angry, then moves to THE NEXT POOL, approaching with caution.

The glass-like water creates a perfect mirror. Pegasus stares at himself, his sad, black eyes as dark as cobalt.

BACK WITH THE OTHERS

They all watch Pegasus, fascinated by his behavior.

ANDROMEDA

Strange. The horse is in love with his own reflection.

AMMON

No. The pools are mirrors. He comes here looking for others like himself.

This hangs in the air. Andromeda understands.

ANDROMEDA

He's the last one... he's all alone.

Ammon nods, then looks to Perseus.

AMMON

What's your plan?

Perseus grabs the ROPE they used in their climb, curling it in his hands, tying the end into a crude lasso.

PERSEUS

I'm going to make friends with him.

NIKO

What kind of a stupid plan is that?

PERSEUS

The only one I can think of.

AMMON
We'll wait at the mountain's base.

IN A SILVERY POOL - LATER

Pegasus drinks from the glacial waters. The wind stops. Pegasus lifts his head, ill-at-ease.

The horse moves on to the next pool, where he suddenly stops, sensing danger. He sniffs the air. Someone is close. The horse can feel it.

WE PAN DOWN to see Perseus laying on his back in the pool, camouflaged by silt. The horse towers over him. Then --

Perseus slowly raises a hand out of the mud, flicking a rock at a nearby boulder. Pegasus turns to the sound, spooked.

In that instant, a ROPE flies around Pegasus' neck.

Pegasus rears up, causing the lasso to tighten, yanking Perseus free of the silky mud and nearly dislocating his shoulder. Pegasus pivots, his flight response taking over.

PERSEUS leaps and manages to mount the horse just as the mighty steed breaks into a thunderous gallop. Pure adrenaline takes over as Perseus holds on for dear life.

PEGASUS twists and turns wildly, trying to dislodge the unwelcome rider.

But Perseus slips his ankles under the joints of Pegasus' wings, using them like saddle stirrups as the horse breaks into a gallop, barrelling through the silver pools.

Perseus holds tight, expecting the beast to take flight. Instead -- Pegasus heads for the edge of a cliff, out of control.

Perseus looks at Pegasus' small wings, suspecting that the fabled flying horse is only that - a fable.

PERSEUS
Fly horse! Fly!

He doesn't. As they near the edge, Perseus realizes he's made a fatal mistake: the horse prefers death to capture.

Perseus tries to jump off, but his hand becomes tangled in the lasso. Twenty feet to the edge.

PERSEUS
Whoa!

Fifteen feet. Perseus jerks on the 'reins.'

PERSEUS
Stop! STOP!

The cliff nears. Perseus nearly tears the skin off his wrist trying to free it. He finally pulls it free, but --

PEGASUS leaps off the cliff.

A small eternity as Pegasus FREE-FALLS, plummeting toward the clouds below. Perseus closes his eyes. *This is the end.*

SUDDENLY -- PEGASUS' WINGS extend from his side, spreading out wide like the wings of a Botticelli angel.

As they unfurl, their tips winnow out and expand, revealing their full length. The multitude of interweaving feathers catch air, providing the massive beast with lift.

But Pegasus' wings don't flap, they work as an air foil, allowing Pegasus to 'ride' the wind much like a glider.

PERSEUS hangs on with every ounce of his strength. He looks around at this bird's eye view of the world... and it scares the hell out of him.

Trying to dislodge him, Pegasus spirals DOWN INTO THE LOW LANDS of the mountain, weaving between dead trees.

BRANCHES fly past Perseus. He ducks one, but then WHAM! A branch strikes him in the temple. He manages to stay on.

Perseus leans forward, patting Pegasus' neck.

PERSEUS
You can do better than that!

Pegasus skirts the hillside and weaves through a series of rock formations, trying to catch Perseus on a jagged edge.

But Perseus is growing accustomed to the arcs and curves of Pegasus' flight. He's finding the rhythm of the horse's movements, riding with them, becoming a part of them.

Running out of tricks, Pegasus goes into a viscous corkscrew.

PERSEUS fights vertigo as they spiral down. His feet begin to slip. His aching muscles scream, taxed beyond their limits. Just as he's about to lapse into unconsciousness --

PEGASUS pulls out of the corkscrew, using his momentum to catch an updraft, soaring over the treetops.

CLOSE ON PEGASUS AND PERSEUS

A calm washes over them as Pegasus accepts his rider. Perseus relaxes as the pure joy of flight takes hold. He's never felt anything like it.

And for a brief moment everything is forgotten. Calabus, Phoenicia, the Fates, Medusa... none of it matters as the wind rushes past, freeing Perseus' soul.

EXT. MOUNT TROKAS - NIGHT

HOURS LATER. At the base of the mountain. The rain has subsided, leaving only a devastated landscape.

Under the banyan tree, Ammon, Andromeda, and Niko sit around a small fire, the stolen horses tethered nearby.

Ammon has a small LYRE and plays a simple folk tune. As he plays, Andromeda stares at him intently. Ammon stops.

AMMON

Something on your mind, Princess?

ANDROMEDA

I'm trying to figure you out.

AMMON

I'll save you the trouble. I'm a long winded old man with bones that hurt, a heart that's full, and a penchant for turning over rocks and finding trouble.

ANDROMEDA

Why do I sense more?

AMMON

Others have looked for more, but all they've found are barren shores.

Then, the trees RUSTLE as something sails across the sky above. Niko jumps up and watches with amazement as --

PEGASUS sweeps the area in a wide arc, Perseus on his back.

The beast floats gracefully to the ground, slowing himself with his wings until his legs find dirt. Pegasus' wings fold back as Perseus guides the baronial beast to their camp.

PERSEUS

Ready your horses. The Wastelands awaits.

EXT. MOUNT TROKAS - DAY

The earth begins to shake. The ground vibrating as HORSES stampede by, obliterating the surface.

WIDE ANGLE - CALABUS and his DARK RIDERS rumble up to the expansive BANYAN TREE at the base of Mount Trokas.

Calabus and Barenea dismount, looking at the tracks scattered around the abandoned camp. Then --

A WHITE FEATHER, nine inches in length, floats from the sky.

Calabus reaches out his hand, where it lands softly. He runs the feather through his thick fingers, thinking. As Calabus touches the feather, IT TURNS BLACK.

Calabus walks back to where Kadmus and the others wait. He mounts his horse, handing the feather to Kadmus.

KADMUS

This changes nothing.

Calabus nods agreement. Barenea mounts his horse.

BARENEA

(off the feather)

What is it?

CALABUS

They've found a winged horse. The last one.

BARENEA

Why do you say it's the last one, master?

From behind his mask, Calabus' dark visage grins.

CALABUS

... I killed all the others.

EXT. A STEEP CANYON - SAME

Ammon and the others guide their horses down a steep mountainside. Loose rocks give way under the weight of the steeds, pitching them forward in awkward throes.

Finally, they reach a valley floor peppered with poplar trees. They dismount to readjust their packs. Perseus approaches Ammon.

PERSEUS

The tree. How did you split it?

Ammon looks up, then draws his sword. He moves to a tree, whose trunk is twice as thick as the fig tree's was.

AMMON

The sword is the warrior's soul. When you strike, strike with your soul, not with your body. Do that, and there isn't a foe who can stand against you.

Ammon nods towards the tree. Perseus draws his sword.

ANDROMEDA watches as Perseus raises his sword. He closes his eyes, breathes deep, as if summoning his strength. Then --

Perseus swings his blade into the tree, splitting it in half. Perseus opens his eyes, amazed at what he's done.

AMMON

Better.

Ammon walks to his horse, mounts it.

AMMON

The ride is still long.

DISSOLVE TO:

A PAIR OF HOOVES work down a sharp bank, then stop as green grass is replaced by grains of sand. We PULL BACK to reveal -

EXT. WASTELANDS - DAY

Perseus atop Pegasus, followed by Andromeda, Ammon, and Niko on their horses. They pause at the edge of a hill.

In the distance are the ruins of a once MAGNIFICENT CITY. It sits half-swallowed by sand. Only fallen columns and the great frames and foundations of monumental buildings remain.

Beyond the city is a barren, lifeless plain. For miles in all directions lay the immeasurably dreary expanse of the Wastelands.

Nearby, VULTURES cluster on a large boulder, staring at them in anticipation. For a moment, no one speaks.

AMMON

The Dead City.

PERSEUS
I thought it sat at an ocean's shore?

AMMON
It does.
(off Wastelands)
The Wastelands were once an ocean.

NIKO
Why was it abandoned?

AMMON
It wasn't abandoned. It was destroyed.

NIKO
What could destroy a city that size?

AMMON
The Kraken.

A quiet beat as a dry breeze crosses their faces.

AMMON
A century ago the city was the jewel of the world. But its people grew vain, rebuking the gods, no longer feeling they needed them. The gods grew angry, unleashing their vengeance.

(off the ruins)
No force on earth can stand in the Kraken's path.

Their eyes rest on the city again: buildings worn to their frames, walls toppled, skeletal in form, like the city was eaten from the inside out.

ANDROMEDA
The place is cursed. We should ride around it.

Ammon spurs his horse on. The others follow, riding away from the extinct metropolis, into the arid landscape.

EXT. DEEP IN THE WASTELANDS - DAY

THE HEAT is a physical presence, an insufferable weight that each must shoulder as they cross this infertile plain.

Perseus rides beside Andromeda, glancing back the way they came. Then ahead. It all looks the same: endless.

FURTHER STILL

A sharp, dry wind stings their faces. The four are spread out now, barely moving on their languid horses. Suddenly --

ANDROMEDA'S HORSE stumbles, pitching her face-first into the sand. Her horse falls, CRUSHING HER WATER SATCHEL. Niko watches as the water is swallowed by the desert.

Perseus dismounts and helps her up. Her clothes cling to her slender body, soaked in sweat. Perseus then checks her horse. He has given all he can. He will die here.

Perseus mounts Pegasus, then pulls Andromeda up behind him. They plod onward at a snail's pace.

EXT. WASTELANDS - LATER

Everyone is on foot. In the b.g., a half-mile back, two more horses lay on their sides, dead. Perseus and Andromeda walk with Pegasus behind them. Ammon and Niko stagger along.

Everyone's lips are cracked, tongues swollen, hair dripping with sweat. Their bodies stained with sand and dirt... the Wastelands are killing them.

They stagger on toward a distant SAND DUNE that casts a dagger-shaped shadow across the dessert.

ANDROMEDA

Tell us a story, Ammon. To pass time.

AMMON

I'm afraid walking is work enough.

NIKO

I have a story. It's about three idiots and a Princess who try to cross a dead ocean.

Niko's laugh turns into a coughing fit. He pauses, opens his water satchel - it's empty.

NIKO

(to Perseus, off Pegasus)
Can't you fly him to water?

PERSEUS

His wings are useless without wind.

NIKO

We should do something to anger Hera. Maybe she'll bring a windstorm.

EXT. SAND DUNE - LATER

They stare up at the dune, exhausted. It towers above them.

PERSEUS
The forest must be on the other side.

Niko forces his way up the dune, ahead of the others. When he crests the dune, he stops, stunned by what he SEES:

From horizon to horizon the same bleak, lifeless landscape
they've just crossed. Niko drops to his knees, his spirit broken. Behind him, the others appear.

NIKO
It's like we haven't moved... not an inch.

Niko clenches a handful of sand and throws it.

NIKO
We're going to die....
(looks to Perseus)
You've killed us, hero.

Perseus says nothing. Ammon reaches for the water satchel.

AMMON
Last cup each.

Ammon fills his cup. He holds it up, then unexpectedly pours it out onto the sand.

NIKO
What are you doing!?

AMMON
I deliver mine to Zeus. An offering for his help.

NIKO
You've finally lost it! You're insane!
Do you hear me!? Insane!

Ammon pours a cup for Andromeda. She pauses, looks to the expanse ahead, then pours out her cup.

Niko stares, incredulous. The cup is passed to Perseus.

NIKO
Don't be stupid, Perseus. Don't trust in gods you can't see.

Perseus pauses, unsure of his choice. Then he makes it.

PERSEUS
It's Ammon I trust in.

Perseus pours his out, too, then hands the last cup to Niko. Niko lifts his cup up in a defiant toast.

NIKO
You're all fools.

Niko drinks the cup dry. The others turn away from him, starting for the endless horizon, silent and disappointed.

Niko looks after them, then down at the place where everyone poured their water... which now turns BLOOD RED.

MATCH CUT TO:

A POOL OF BLOOD...

EXT. WASTELANDS - DAY

VULTURES tear flesh from a carcass. A SHADOW falls over the carnivorous birds, who scatter in a flurry of wings, revealing the ravaged skeleton of Andromeda's horse.

The shadow is cast by Calabus. Kadmus, Barenea, and the other dark riders at his side, their own steeds seemingly unaffected by the formidable heat.

Calabus looks out at the endless nothingness: he understands this place, feels at home in its emptiness.

Barenea watches as wind erases their prey's tracks.

BARENEA
We've lost them.

CALABUS
We've lost nothing.

Calabus looks to the feeding vultures. The birds suddenly turn to face him, as if waiting to hear him speak.

CALABUS
(to the vultures)
Find them.

The vultures take flight, heading off into the horizon. Calabus and his men spur their horses onward, following.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELSEWHERE IN THE WASTELANDS - DAY

Perseus, Andromeda, Niko, and Ammon lie motionless on the sand.

Pegasus stands over Perseus, as if guarding his body, unwillingly to let go of the rider he so recently accepted. Pegasus leans down, nudging Perseus with his snout, braying.

Perseus moves, his eyes barely open. He looks up, defeated.

Pegasus senses his impending death. The great horse turns and walks off... into the wild.

EXT. WASTELANDS - LATER

A dry wind sweeps across the Wastelands. The bodies of Perseus and the others come into focus. They're covered in sand, half-swallowed by the desert.

Then, the sound of HOOVES slowly invades the moment. The pounding comes to a stop O.S., just above Perseus and the others. Then, it's as if all the clouds in heaven opened up. Pouring down upon them... WATER.

Perseus jerks into consciousness, the cool rush of water tearing him back from the jaws of death. He looks up to see -

PEGASUS. His wings spread above him like an angel. WATER FALLS from the thousands of folds in his feathers.

The horse has found water.

DEEPER INTO THE WASTELANDS

Perseus has tethered a piece of canvas to Pegasus. Andromeda, Niko, and Ammon lie upon it, unconscious. Pegasus pulls them up a ridge, cresting it to see --

AN OASIS

Two brilliant pools surrounded by lush vegetation. Green and cool, it is a paradise in the middle of hell.

EXT. OASIS - LATER

Andromeda opens her eyes to see Perseus above her. He gently lifts her head, pours water into her mouth.

She sits up, looks at the lush oasis as Ammon and Niko stir.

ANDROMEDA
What is this place?

PERSEUS
Salvation.

BY THE LOWER POOL

Niko and Perseus dive into the water. Ammon sits at the water's edge, silent.

ANDROMEDA looks up to the secluded upper pool, which is fifteen feet higher than where they stand.

ANDROMEDA
I'm going to bathe - in private.

She eagerly climbs up the rocks to the second pool.

PEGASUS drinks at the edge of the pool. Suddenly, the horse looks up and brays, staring into the foliage.

Ammon notices the horse's unease. He draws his sword, disappearing into the tall reeds to investigate.

PERSEUS AND NIKO wash their shirts. Niko's chest has several knife scars gained from a life on the streets.

As they stand waist-deep in water, Niko's eyes go wide. ALL THE SCARS on his body vanish, as if washed away.

NIKO
How is this possible... ?

But Perseus has no answer. Then Niko notices something:

NIKO
The scars on your arms. They're still there.

Perseus looks at his wrists. They are indeed still there, the only marks on his body the pool didn't heal.

Ammon appears from the foliage.

AMMON
I've found something.

ELSEWHERE IN THE OASIS

Perseus, Niko, and Ammon stand before a group of SKELETONS scattered around a clearing. Spears and rusted swords lie everywhere.

Ammon notices a symbol painted on a dented shield - a TRIDENT (a three-pronged spear) over a royal crest.

AMMON
The crest of Antioch.

PERSEUS
That must be a thousand miles away. What were Antiochian soldiers doing here?

AMMON
There's a story about a prince of Antioch - Nicolae. They say he lost his bride to plague... then lost his mind. He rallied his entire guard and set out to The Land of the Dead to find her - even dragging a ship behind them to cross the River Styx... They never returned.

Perseus looks across the oasis, its beauty now evoking an ominous feeling.

PERSEUS
What killed them?

AMMON
I don't know.

Niko spies a shield, a large claw mark shreds across it.

NIKO
Whatever it was, it was big.

THE UPPER POOL

Andromeda strips off her filthy clothes, leaving only her silk camisole on. She wades into the water, floating in it, lost in its cool enveloping hold. Until --

A soft SPLASH. Andromeda opens her eyes, swimming in place.

ANDROMEDA
Niko? Perseus?

No answer. Just soft ripples upon the surface of the pool. A fear overcomes her, tension filling the air, until --

A LARGE BEAST explodes from the water, towering over her. It happens so fast, we only see IT for a split-second.

PERSEUS

hears Andromeda SCREAM. He grabs his sword, rushing for --

THE UPPER POOL

Perseus reaches it and stops dead in his tracks. Halfway into the pool, facing Andromeda stands --

AN IMMENSE, MUSCLED CREATURE. It has a lion's body and a head that is a hybrid of a boar and a bear. Most unsettling are its eyes, which glare with a human-like understanding. Ammon and Niko join Perseus.

NIKO
(shocked)
What is it?

AMMON
... A Griffin.

The Griffin ROARS. A sound like a thousand tigers. Perseus makes eye contact with Andromeda, who is petrified.

PERSEUS
Move towards me. Slowly.

Andromeda slowly backs out of the pool, her camisole clinging to her. She makes her way to Perseus, hiding her half-naked body behind him, the Griffin eyeing her the whole time.

PERSEUS
(to Ammon)
Any suggestions?

AMMON
We hold our ground.

They stand firm. The Griffin doesn't advance. Doesn't retreat. Just stares at them. Then --

A SECOND GRIFFIN leaps from above them to join the first.

NIKO
Any other suggestions?

The second Griffin stalks towards Ammon, stopping directly in front of him, ROARING. Then Ammon does something odd: he speaks to the creature as if it were human.

AMMON
We'll leave in peace. There is no need for blood.

The Griffin stares at Ammon as if it were actually considering his words. Then the Griffin shifts its focus, moving towards Niko, bearing its fangs.

Niko panics. He turns and runs.

AMMON
Niko, no!

The Griffin charges after him.

THE REMAINING GRIFFIN attacks. Perseus swings his sword, striking the Griffin's shoulder. The Griffin recoils in pain, then pounces in anger. Perseus is knocked down, falling backwards, losing his sword.

Perseus rolls to his side, avoiding the Griffin's jaws. As he twists away from the attack, the Griffin's claws catch him in the back, drawing blood.

ANDROMEDA
Perseus!

Andromeda throws Perseus his sword just in time for him to keep the charging Griffin at bay.

NIKO sprints through the oasis, the Griffin gaining. He spots two boulders with a small gap between them - a refuge.

He angles for the rocks, only ten feet from safety when he stumbles, losing his MONEY POUCH. He instinctively turns to retrieve it, a fatal mistake --

The Griffin's claws catch Niko, slicing his jaw open.

Ammon rushes to his aid, but he's too late. The Griffin mauls Niko, whose DEATH SCREAMS echo across the oasis.

PERSEUS hears the screams. He turns, forgetting about the Griffin he's fighting. The Griffin pounces when suddenly --

PEGASUS breaks from the foliage, slamming his muscled body into the Griffin. Both beasts thunder to the ground.

The Griffin staggers to its feet, recovering, when one of Pegasus' powerful legs catch it in the head. The Griffin falls, unconscious.

BACK WITH NIKO

The Griffin is killing him. Ammon tries to fight the creature off, but it knocks him aside just as --

PERSEUS charges out of nowhere, leaping at the animal. The Griffin whirls, knocking Perseus down.

But Perseus rolls to his feet and keeps coming, slashing the Griffin's side, drawing blood.

The angered Griffin pounces, leading with its CLAWS. But Perseus sidesteps the advance, striking one of the Griffin's front legs as it lands. This forces the Griffin onto its side, exposing its neck.

In that instant, Perseus has his sword poised at its throat.

AMMON
Perseus, don't!

Perseus, charged with adrenaline and vengeance, barely stops his sword thrust.

AMMON
They're sacred to Zeus!

Perseus presses the blade tighter to the Griffin's throat.

AMMON
Kill it and we're no better than Calabus.

Perseus is torn. Finally, he lifts his sword from the Griffin and backs away. The Griffin watches him, a human-like understanding in its eyes.

Perseus is wary of another attack, but the Griffin calmly moves a short distance away and sits.

Cautious of the Griffin, Perseus goes to Niko's side.

Niko is slashed with claw marks. His hair a bloody mop. His side split open, he doesn't breathe.

PERSEUS
(quiet)
No.

Ammon appears over Perseus' shoulder.

AMMON
He's gone, Perseus.

PERSEUS
No....

Perseus picks Niko up, blood soaking his arms. He carries him into the pool, its waters turning crimson around them.

Andromeda and Ammon watch Perseus, saddened and moved. Behind them, the first Griffin joins the second.

PERSEUS holds Niko. But the waters of the pool don't seem to be working. Perhaps they can only heal the living, not bring one back from the edge of death. Perseus senses this.

PERSEUS
(to the pool, to the gods, anyone)
Please... Help him... Help him.

As if to answer, the curative powers of the pool begin to take hold. Niko's wounds close, the slashes disappear without leaving a blemish to his skin.

Life behind Niko's eyes returns. He regains his mental faculties, and finally his physical mobility, standing.

Perseus hugs him, clutching tight. Then they let go. Niko is silent, transformed by the experience. Somehow, alive.

NIKO
I owe you my life.

PERSEUS
You owe me nothing.

Perseus steps out of the pool, eyeing the Griffins, weary.

AMMON
(to Perseus, off Griffins)
You spared their lives; they'll let us leave in peace.

PERSEUS
Then let's do, before they change their minds.

EXT. WASTELANDS - LATER

The group continues across the barren wastelands. The heat is formidable, but it doesn't seem to phase them now. For the first time, Niko walks at the front, setting the pace.

ANDROMEDA
(off Niko)
He hasn't spoken in hours.

PERSEUS
He'll speak when he's ready.

And with that, they lapse into silence, toiling forward into the great expanse of nothingness.

EXT. WASTELANDS - HOURS LATER

The group reaches the base of a colossal SAND DUNE. Another moment of truth.

As they struggle up the dune, a silence hangs over them, each hoping to not find another endless stretch of desert.

Finally, they crest the ridge and are hit by a cool breeze blowing from --

THE FOREST OF DARKNESS

Its impact is startling: an immense, black forest that rises out of the desert like a bulwark against the sky - a solid wall of trees stretching across the horizon.

EXT. FOREST OF DARKNESS - DAY

As they near the edge of the forest, the trees dwarf them like ants. Their sheer size is awe-inspiring: three times the width of a Redwood, each extending a thousand feet or more into the sky. They take it in, overwhelmed.

ANDROMEDA

I've never felt so small.

Niko's face darkens. He has a bad feeling about this place. But he doesn't need to say it. Everyone else feels it too.

INSIDE THE TREE LINE

The group weaves beneath the massive woods, trampling through dense underbrush, each astonished by the scope of the forest.

As the wind blows, the tree limbs rustle. But all other forest noises are absent: no birds, crickets, frogs, cicadas, or the thousand other sounds of a living forest. Just the eerie, one-dimensional whistle of the wind.

It's as if the forest itself were dead.

Perseus stops. Ahead of him, a twenty-foot-wide path has been hacked through the underbrush. They move towards it.

EXT. FOREST - LATER

Light dances around them as rays of sun pierce the forest's canopy, creating a baleful ambience to the misgiving thicket. Then, they come across --

THE HULL OF A BOAT

Weather-beaten and rotting, its bow has a TRIDENT painted beside an Antiochian crest. The heavy ropes used to pull it across the Wastelands still notched into its hull.

AMMON
Nicolae's expedition.

Perseus looks around, not a soul in sight. But everywhere are the telltale signs of a battle: broken arrows, swords, spears... But no bodies.

A strong wind blows. The branches sway, sending creaking sounds across the breeze. Niko's silence is almost a physical presence among the group.

ANDROMEDA
Something horrible happened here.

AMMON
They were ambushed.

Perseus examines the area where the path comes to an halt.

PERSEUS
It would've taken dozens of men to clear this path. Seasoned soldiers tough enough to survive the Wastelands. If they were ambushed, they would've fought.

ANDROMEDA
Then where are the bodies?

No one can answer. They glance around at the thick underbrush, half expecting an attack.

Then Perseus looks up and notices something.

PERSEUS
... They went up.

Off his words, the others look up to SEE what he sees -- A TRIDENT carved into a huge branch above them.

UP IN THE TREES - MOMENTS LATER

Thirty feet up, they all stand on a branch as wide as a road. Above, the trees climb skyward hundreds of feet higher, with branches hundreds of yards long. From this vantage point, it's like being caught between endless spiderwebs.

Carved into the tree next to a trident is an arrow, pointing West. The enormous branches intertwine ahead, creating a traversable series of pathways above the forest floor.

PERSEUS

They crossed through the trees.

ANDROMEDA

But why?

PERSEUS

(off the ground)

Because something is down there.

Perseus looks down, then takes a step back from the branch's edge, fighting vertigo. It is a long way down.

EXT. FOREST OF DARKNESS - HOURS LATER.

Crossing upon the branches, the group passes another TRIDENT which directs them deeper into the forest.

Sticking from a nearby tree, Niko finds a SPEAR smeared with dried blood. That's when a loud RUMBLING SHATTERS the forest's silence.

BELOW THEM - ON THE GROUND

Motion. Dozens of BLACK FORMS move swiftly through the brush in a pack, synchronized, all of one mind. These are --

THEOTEPAS. Ravenous, dog-sized creatures akin to jackals. They are coal-black with exoskeletons that cover their bodies like armor. In the darkness of the forest, their eyes burn an amber red.

The group watches them, almost in shock as they realize the horrible fate they avoided by crossing through the trees.

ANDROMEDA

They would have torn us apart.

AMMON

Undeniably.

They move on, passing beneath a nook in a tree where an UNUSUAL SPIDER WEB comes into view. We HOLD ON the WEB, moving in, watching as THREE SPIDERS weave a complex pattern. Each spider spins their silk to a common KNOT - we've seen this knot before... at the Fates. The knot is growing tighter.

MATCH CUT TO:

ANOTHER WEB...

INT. PALACE - THE QUEEN'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Three different SPIDERS weave an identical knot, which grows larger, placing a strain on the threads of the web, threatening to break it apart. We PULL BACK to reveal --

QUEEN CASSIOPEIA staring at the web, which stretches from the corner of a marble column to the ceiling.

Flames from the battle outside reflect off the column. The SCREAMS of war echo from outside, like a coming storm.

A FIGURE enters behind her.

A DEEP VOICE
We should move to the higher towers, Your Highness. They will be the last to fall.

She ignores the statement, transfixed by the spiders' work.

CASSIOPEIA
(off the web)
It's a portent.

The figure comes into the light. It's Rena. He's covered in blood, his face stained with the guilt of defeat.

CASSIOPEIA
See how the threads are knotted? The fabric strains, the web itself nearly broken, its design nearly undone.

RENA
What does it mean?

Cassiopeia pauses, then finally turns to face him.

CASSIOPEIA
It means the end is near.

CLOSE ON HER GREEN EYES - distant and haunting. But she does not cry. There are no more tears to give.

MATCH CUT TO:

IDENTICAL GREEN EYES...

fixed on something. We PULL BACK to reveal Andromeda, who stands high up in a canopy of the trees. She looks at --

A TRIDENT MARKER carved into a tree, an inscription in Sanskrit chiseled beside it. She reads it, her face pale.

ANDROMEDA

Death above, death below. Soon comes the beast that wants your soul.

This hangs in the air. As does the sound of the trailing pack of Theotepas, which circle below, hungry for blood.

PERSEUS

(off inscription)

Ammon?

AMMON

I don't know what it means.

ANDROMEDA

It means we should move faster.

DEEPER STILL

As they pass round a huge trunk, they SPOT something. Its shape is unnatural, man-made.

As they move closer, they realize it is a "fort" constructed amongst the trees.

THE FORT

Branches have been cut and tied, creating a man-made floor. A series of walls were built in a similar fashion to protect two distinct 'rooms,' which comprise the fort's core.

Parts of the fort are torn and mangled. ARROWS and SPEARS stick from branches around them. But again, no bodies. Only the scars of battle remain.

PERSEUS

This is where they made their last stand.

ANDROMEDA

But against what?

No one knows. Perseus leads them into the FIRST ROOM where Ammon notices more Sanskrit etched onto the walls.

AMMON

Andromeda. Over here.

Andromeda walks over, rubbing her hands along the wood, feeling the emotion carved deep into the grain.

ANDROMEDA
(reading it)
Whatever attacked this place is called
the Tomtin.

As she reads, her face fills with restrained fear.

ANDROMEDA
It says this forest is a buffer between
the land of the living and that of the
dead. That the Tomtin feeds upon the
souls of men. And that none shall pass
without being consumed by the beast.

Andromeda hesitates, her voice breaking off.

ANDROMEDA
One man wrote all this as the others were
slowly killed off.

Niko walks ahead of the others into the SECOND ROOM. What he
sees deeply disturbs him. He finally speaks.

NIKO
... There's more.

The others turn towards Niko - shocked to hear him speak.
When they move into the second room, their faces go ashen.

THE SECOND ROOM

Every inch of the walls are COVERED by TINY HANDWRITING - the
same TWO WORDS repeated over and over, and over again.

Compared to the other etchings, these look hastily carved, as
if etched by a madman, a man driven insane by what he'd seen.

PERSEUS
What does it say?

Andromeda snaps out of it.

ANDROMEDA
It says, "The voices..." "The voices..."
"The voices..."

The group stands in silence as the last rays of sunlight
fade. The wind stirs, leaves rustle.

PERSEUS
We'll make our stand here.

ANDROMEDA

Here? Whatever killed them is still out there! We should keep moving.

PERSEUS

The night is upon us. We'll need light to negotiate the forest.

(off fort)

At least here we have weapons and a defensive position.

Niko looks out at the forest, eyes full of trepidation. Then he grabs a discarded bow and a quiver of arrows.

NIKO

I'll take the first watch.

CUT TO:

A SWORD STABS INTO A TREE...

We PULL BACK to see that the sword's handle has been tightly bound in cloth. Ammon lights the cloth.

Around him, a DOZEN SWORDS protrude from branches, handles ablaze. They give the forest an eerie glow. Nearby --

Niko sits alone on a massive branch, bow in hand, arrow between his fingers. He stares out into the woods as Ammon walks the branch back, joining him.

A beat as Niko watches the hypnotic flickering of the torches' flame. Then, he turns to Ammon.

NIKO

You know what was in my mind, when the Griffin had me? That nothing I'd ever done mattered. That life doesn't matter because life just ends. At that point, the Griffin didn't have to kill me. I was already dead.

(beat)

Tell me, why do you have such faith?

The wind whistles through the trees. Somewhere in the distance, a tree limb cracks, echoing through the forest. They both watch and listen, but nothing comes... yet.

AMMON

I fought at Leuktra.

NIKO

I thought everyone died there?

AMMON

Most did. Those who survived were never the same.

NIKO

What happened?

Ammon breathes deep, as if summoning the courage to remember.

AMMON

We were defending the Kalladrimos pass. On one side of the fort was a sheer cliff, on the other the enemy. We were vastly outnumbered, but held them off for days. But soon, the fort was put to flames. A few of us escaped by using a rope bridge strung between the two sides of the gorge. But that soon burned, trapping two hundred men on the ramparts of the burning fort.

(hard memory)

We watched as all of them jumped from the cliffs. One by one... For two hours they jumped... and they jumped.

A long, solemn moment as Niko imagines seeing such a thing.

NIKO

They jumped to avoid burning?

AMMON

It was more than that. They weren't jumping from the fire, Niko. They were jumping into the next life... into paradise. They had to know it - see it to do something so brave.

NIKO

How? How do you know they saw the afterlife?

AMMON

Because as they fell, not a one of them screamed... not a single one.

This sinks in with Niko, who's deeply moved by the story.

INT. THE FORT - SAME

Perseus and Andromeda lay near one another, both unable to sleep. Perseus looks up. The trees disappear into clouds above, moonlight slices through intermittently.

Then, Andromeda opens her eyes. For a moment they say nothing, they just gaze at one another.

ANDROMEDA
What are you thinking?

Perseus pauses before answering.

PERSEUS
Three days ago I was preparing to die in battle. Now, I'm lying next to a Princess in a forest I never knew existed. It makes you wonder if there's a design to it all.

ANDROMEDA
There is a design.

Perseus nods, then --

PERSEUS
And you? What were you thinking?

ANDROMEDA
When I was a girl, I went with my father to the country, near Tegea. We stayed for the hunting season. I swam in the lake every day... laid in the sun.

(beat)
I want to go back there... when this is over.

Perseus holds her stare, thinking about what most men think of while looking at a beautiful woman.

PERSEUS
Perhaps you could recommend me for a position at the estate. I could use a few years of country living.

ANDROMEDA
I was thinking that you would take me.
That we would go together.

A beat. Then Perseus leans into her, their lips brush across one another's until their mouths lock. One can literally feel the energy that explodes through them, the room, the forest. They pull apart.

PERSEUS
Are Princesses allowed to kiss commoners?

ANDROMEDA

There is nothing common about you,
Perseus. Nothing at all.

Then they kiss again, more passionately, more aggressively.

TIME DISSOLVE:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Niko has fallen asleep in the crook of a huge tree.

Ammon sits on the branch, legs crossed, monk-like. He stares out into the forest, past the torch light, as if watching something... Something only he can see. Then --

THE VOICES FINALLY COME:

WHISPERS at first, floating across the wind. Ammon's eyes narrow. More WHISPERS... many at once... soft and distant, but moving closer. All around him.

Ammon stands, drawing his sword. Nearby, Pegasus lets out a nervous bray.

INSIDE THE FORT

Perseus and Andromeda are now asleep, bodies entangled. The whispers invade the room. Perseus stirs.

Then he hears them, voices, full of fear and terror, and growing louder.

Niko wakes to the chorus of whispers. He stands, bow and arrow ready. He sees Ammon on the branch in front of him, facing the black forest.

Perseus and Andromeda exit the fort, joining Niko and Ammon. Ammon stares towards a distant point in the forest. No one speaks. They only listen. The voices come from everywhere and nowhere at once.

AMMON

Do you see it?

They all follow Ammon's gaze, but see nothing. Only swaying branches stabbing through a black forest.

PERSEUS

Where?

AMMON

Straight ahead.

They all squint their eyes. Still nothing, until --

A FORM - almost a shadow - leaps from one branch to another. Too far to see, but the leap covered thirty feet - easy.

AMMON

... The Tomtin.

PANNING ACROSS each of their faces, fear in everyone's eyes. The beast that comes brings death. And they know it.

Then the VOICES: WHISPERS, CRIES and SCREAMS; the pained agony of loss, of things unrequited, of souls in torment.

PERSEUS

... The Fort.

RETREAT... They all move back to the fort, each taking up a defensive position, straining to see the creature.

Then a flash of MOVEMENT as the BEAST vaults from a branch, knocking two torches down. Niko releases an arrow, the WHISH trails into the night. He draws another, notches it.

AMMON

Wait until it's closer.

Niko nods. Another long beat. Then two more torches are downed, tumbling to the forest floor far below.

Suddenly, the creature bounds from a branch just fifty feet out. It stops, partially in view, obscured by SHADOWS.

This is THE TOMTIN.

An immense, towering figure with grey, leathery skin. Eight feet tall, muscled, with claws for hands, and a SINGLE EYE at the center of its head that seems to bore right through you.

But what's most disturbing is found upon its chest: THOUSANDS OF FACES fighting and clawing to be seen... Victims trapped inside the beast, their voices screaming.

The Tomtin stares down its challengers, and smiles almost, exposing hideously sharp teeth. Then --

The beast clasps a THICK BRANCH and snaps it free, heaving it at the fort below.

The BRANCH, ten feet long and four feet thick, SMASHES into the fort's foundation, obliterating their foothold.

Andromeda is knocked from the branch, falling.

PERSEUS

No!

Andromeda tumbles down through the forest, her body striking smaller limbs which slow her descent. She's bounced and thrown from limb to limb until finally she hits the ground.

ABOVE - Ammon turns to Perseus.

AMMON

Go after her! We'll handle the beast!

Perseus jumps on Pegasus.

PERSEUS

(to Pegasus)

Go!

Pegasus leaps from the limb, spreading his wings.

FLYING THROUGH THE TREES

They glide down impossibly fast, looping and twisting through the maze of branches.

BACK AT THE FORT

The VOICES echo around Ammon and Niko as the beast circles them like a shark, moving amongst the thick branches, using its arms to move in unpredictable ways - almost like an insect, changing directions in gravity-defying movements.

Suddenly, another BRANCH flies at them. Ammon and Niko leap down as the fort splinters into a thousand pieces.

The concussion subsides. Niko and Ammon search for movement. Nothing. The voices have fallen silent.

NIKO

Where is it?

Flashes in the distance. The black of night surrounds them.

AMMON

It's toying with us. It wants us to be afraid.

NIKO

... It's working.

ON THE GROUND

Perseus finds Andromeda tangled in dense brush.

She has a deep cut across her forehead, but appears fine.

PERSEUS
Are you okay?

Andromeda manages a nod. Then, a LOW GROWL. They hear it before we do. Then a chorus of GROWLS.

THE PACK OF THEOTEPAS appear from the underbrush only twenty feet away. Fear brings Andromeda to her senses.

PERSEUS
(a whisper)
Don't move... not an inch.

Pegasus snorts an angry, nervous bray as the pack's bloodlust intensifies. The PACK LEADER moves forward, snarling.

Perseus spots a sloping branch twenty yards off. Then he looks to Pegasus, who is ten yards away. With his eyes, Perseus motions toward the branch.

Pegasus' black eyes follow his. We know Pegasus sees the branch too. We know the horse understands his rider.

PERSEUS
(to Andromeda)
The branch... when I say.

Pegasus moves between the Theotepas and Perseus, stomping his hooves, drawing their attention.

THE PACK grows angry, creeping closer, until --

PEGASUS SPRINTS FOR THE WOODS. As Perseus hoped, the pack leader bullets after Pegasus. The others follow her lead.

PERSEUS
Run!

Perseus and Andromeda run for the trees. But the pack leader shifts her focus, realizing they are easier prey.

RUNNING. Perseus looks back. The carnivorous horde angles towards them. There's no way to outrun the frenzied beasts. Andromeda sees them gaining. A SCREAM passes her lips as --

PEGASUS leaps from the brush. With one arm, Perseus grabs Pegasus' mane and pulls himself and Andromeda onto his back.

The Theotepas swarm after Pegasus as he leaps to the sloping branch, leaving the angry pack HOWLING on the forest floor.

FAR ABOVE

Ammon and Niko are trapped on an isolated branch, unable to jump to another tree. As they look for an escape, the one-eyed beast appears, towering over them, terror incarnate.

Then the creature PLUNGES HIS CLAW into Niko. He screams as the Tomtin begins to draw out a silvery-substance from his chest - his soul.

AMMON

No!

Ammon draws his dagger, throwing it into the creature's neck. The Tomtin recoils, releasing Niko's soul, its scream nearly shattering their eardrums.

Ammon waves his sword, inviting the enraged Tomtin to fight.

AMMON

Come creature... come meet your end.

In a blind rage, the Tomtin rips the dagger from its neck.

Ammon backs up, taunting the creature away from Niko. The monster moves forward as AGONIZED FACES appear and disappear upon its chest, screaming for release.

Ammon swings his sword. The Tomtin knocks it away, and in a quick and violent move, snaps Ammon's arm in two. He SCREAMS in agony. It strikes again, knocking Ammon twenty feet back.

Ammon staggers up, face swollen, bloodied. The Tomtin moves closer, teeth exposed, hate-filled eye. Ammon smiles as he stares it down, unafraid.

AMMON

You are nothing... just a soulless beast
unfit for this world.

The Tomtin wails. Blood and spit spew from its mouth. Then, it STRIKES Ammon with a brutal bash, sending him TUMBLING to a branch thirty feet below, barely alive.

The beast jumps down, effortlessly landing beside Ammon. The VOICES in the Tomtin's chest SCREAM and RAIL.

The beast reaches down, ready for one more soul, when --

A SWORD PIERCES THE TOMTIN'S CHEST.

The Tomtin turns, slashing at --

NIKO, who is knocked back by the beast. The Tomtin goes berserker crazy, leaps for Niko, but is met with --

ANOTHER BLADE. It rips through the creature's chest from behind. The Tomtin twists, revealing --

PERSEUS, who pulls his sword from the stunned creature's body. Before the Tomtin can recover, Perseus KICKS it from the branch.

THE CREATURE PLUMMETS through the trees until it hits the ground. The Theotepas converge, devouring the Tomtin.

As the pack tears it to pieces, a BRIGHT LIGHT bursts from within the Tomtin, illuminating the forest with a thousand rays of glimmering light. We watch as --

THE SOULS OF THOUSANDS

are released from their captivity inside the Tomtin. The glowing orbs illuminate the dark night, spreading out across the forest, each finding their way to the afterlife.

PERSEUS and Niko stand over Ammon. It's bad, very bad. Ammon can barely talk. Andromeda joins them.

Perseus lifts Ammon's head, cradling it in his hands. Blood seeps from his mouth, his breathing strained.

PERSEUS

Don't die, Ammon. I need you.

Ammon manages a small, reassuring smile.

AMMON

Everything you need, you already have....

Niko and Andromeda are numbed, eyes swollen with tears.

PERSEUS

Stay... Ammon. Stay.

AMMON

... Perseus... look at her, but don't see....

Then Ammon's eyes trail off, finding peace in stillness. His eyelids fall... Ammon is dead.

DISSOLVE TO:

SMOKE DRIFTS TOWARDS THE HEAVENS...

The crackle of burning wood the only sound. We PAN DOWN to a funeral pyre. Perseus, Andromeda, and Niko watch as Ammon's body is given a proper passage to the afterlife.

Niko moves closer to Perseus, who doesn't look away from the flames, his eyes reflecting its intensity.

PERSEUS
When we find her island, I go alone.

NIKO
No. I go with you.

Perseus faces Niko, eyes wet, angry, already decided.

PERSEUS
I go alone.

Perseus walks away. The pyre burns behind him, the flames strong and bright.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE WASTELANDS - SAME

Calabus and his men ride from the Wastelands, approaching the Forest of Darkness. The trees loom large before them, casting shadows as black as night.

Kadmus pulls short. Calabus stops beside him.

A stillness surrounds them. Kadmus cocks his head, as if listening to the wind.

KADMUS
One of them is dead.
(beat)
And something has changed.

CALABUS
What?

Kadmus turns to Calabus, his words echoing in the stillness.

KADMUS
He believes now.

CALABUS
Then I will take that from him too.

Calabus angrily spurs his horse forward. His riders follow, their horses' hooves pounding like war drums as they disappear into the forest.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST OF DARKNESS - NIGHT

Perseus, Andromeda, and Niko emerge from the far side of the forest to find themselves on a cliff high above --

THE RIVER STYX.

Beyond the river is the LAND OF THE DEAD, a dark expanse shrouded in GREY MIST and low-lying THUNDER STORMS.

At the center of the river is a sight they've earned seeing -- MEDUSA'S ISLAND. It rises out of the river at a forty-five-degree angle, resembling the aft of a sinking ship.

At its highest point is a dilapidated VILLA surrounded by endless terraced gardens. A fog clings to the island, as if shrouding the unholy place from the eyes of the gods.

EXT. CLIFF - DAWN

The sun rises. Perseus stands next to Pegasus, double-checking the ropes used as the horse's reigns.

Andromeda appears beside him. The weight of Ammon's death heavy in their eyes.

She raises her hands to her neck, taking off her NECKLACE - the gold coin with the image of her father.

ANDROMEDA

My father said it would protect me from death.

As Andromeda clasps the necklace around his neck, the morning light suddenly turns grey. Andromeda looks up as the sun disappears behind a layer of dark clouds.

ANDROMEDA

(off the disappearing sun)

I feel like we're living through a night that will see no dawn.

PERSEUS

We'll see the sun again.

ANDROMEDA
... Over Phoenicia?

PERSEUS
Over Phoenicia.

Her hands fall to his. She wants to believe him. For a moment, they are quiet, until a single tear escapes her eyes.

ANDROMEDA
Come back, Perseus.

Perseus nods, there's nothing left to say. Andromeda walks back to the fire.

Niko walks over, faces his friend, then looks to the island.

NIKO
Kill her.

Niko and Perseus clasp arms, wrist to wrist.

Perseus mounts Pegasus and spurs him into a gallop, racing for the cliff. At the edge, Pegasus leaps off --

IN THE AIR

Pegasus keeps his wings tucked tight, falling. They plummet down towards the black currents of the River Styx until Pegasus spreads his wings wide, taking flight.

BACK ON THE CLIFF

Andromeda watches as Perseus and Pegasus disappear into the mist surrounding the island. Trepidation rules her face.

Niko takes out his satchel of gold. Then he does something he's never done: he kneels down, closes his eyes, and prays.

When he's finished, he winds back and THROWS THE SATCHEL off the cliff. It falls for a small eternity until it splashes into the river, disappearing into its oily currents.

Andromeda walks over, wrapping an arm through Niko's.

ANDROMEDA
He will come back... He will.

EXT. MEDUSA'S ISLAND - MIDDLE TERRACE - DAY

Pegasus breaks from clouds to land in an overgrown, terraced garden. MIST swirls around them like a living thing.

Below them, Perseus spots a WOODEN DOCK along the edge of the island. Floating in the river beside it is a TWELVE-FOOT BOAT shaped like a Venetian-style gondola.

A LONE FIGURE stands at the keel, motionless.

Pegasus brays, uneasy. Perseus looks to the UPPER TERRACE where he can make out a walkway of ascending marble steps.

Perseus dismounts, drawing his sword.

PERSEUS
(to Pegasus)
Wait here. I'll be back.

UPPER TERRACE

The DULL ROAR of the river blends with the TRICKLE of water from the numerous FOUNTAINS.

But instead of water, the fountains flow a foul, BLACK LIQUID. Perseus watches as a leaf drifts into one, sizzling into smoke. The liquid is acid.

Perseus moves towards the center of the gardens, tension in every step. As he does, a FIGURE HOLDING A LANCE comes into view, just visible within the mist. He raises his sword.

The figure holds his ground. As Perseus circles to his right, another FIGURE appears over his shoulder.

Instantly, Perseus pivots, dropping to one knee, swinging his sword lightning fast. WHAM! His sword deflects off the figure. Perseus wheels back, quickly realizing that --

THE FIGURE IS A STATUE.

A rush of wind blows the mist away to reveal DOZENS OF OTHER 'STATUES,' so lifelike, it defies understanding.

He walks closer to the statue he struck. Where his sword cracked its surface, IT BLEEDS. Perseus realizes that --

These aren't statues, but men... VICTIMS OF MEDUSA.

A shiver runs up Perseus' spine. He spots the outline of stairs overgrown with ivy.

AT THE TOP OF THE STEPS, Perseus enters a COURTYARD filled with exquisite statues of the gods. These are the first "actual" statues we've seen.

Perseus registers something odd: Apollo's statue is identical to his depiction in the palace temple. Then a sound --

Perseus turns to look behind him - nothing is there.

A FLASH OF MOVEMENT to his right. He spins, swinging his sword. Instead of an attacker, his weapon deflects off a -- GOLD SHIELD attached to the statue of Apollo. A second before, the shield hadn't been there.

AT THE CENTER OF THE SHIELD is an image of a WOMAN'S FACE with serpents for hair. Perseus holds up his sword, realizing the design of the shield matches the design of his sword. They were forged by the same craftsman.

Perseus takes the shield. Its interior is as smooth as polished glass. He slips his arm through the leather straps, it fits him like a well-worn glove.

Perseus looks up into the face of Apollo's statue, grateful. Then he turns to face the villa.

BURNING TORCHES are mounted above the villa's colossal door, meaning only one thing: *Medusa is home.*

INSIDE THE VILLA

FRESCOES decorate the columned entrance way. Each column is chiseled in the form of a coiled snake. The snakes' outstretched jaws serve as torch holders.

Perseus' FOOTSTEPS echo as he enters the MAIN HALL. With each step, he sees movement around him.

Perseus spins in a circle, realizing it's his OWN SHADOW dancing off the walls. The torches from the serpents' mouths are placed perfectly to create this disorienting effect.

Perseus realizes that *he is not the hunter here. Medusa is.* Then, a SOUND from behind him chills his soul...

A SLITHERING-CRAWL, like the sound of a large dead fish being drug across the floor accompanied by an intense RATTLING.

Before Perseus can react, an ARROW PIERCES his shoulder, violently knocking him to the ground.

He rolls to the side, narrowly avoiding a SECOND ARROW, which slams into the marble floor.

Perseus dives behind a column, his mind racing with fear and adrenaline. Then a terrifying, hypnotic voice echoes, like the irresistible call of a siren.

MEDUSA'S VOICE

Look at me....

Shaking off his pain, Perseus races to an adjacent corridor.

THE CORRIDOR

As Perseus runs down it, he slices the torches from the walls with his sword, throwing the passage into darkness.

Perseus makes it to another HALLWAY, stopping to catch his breath. As his adrenaline rush subsides, his shoulder wound screams out in pain. The arrow must come out.

Perseus leans against a wall and grips the arrow's shaft with both hands. Finally, he pulls the arrow free, screaming.

HIS SCREAM reverberates through the villa. As the echo subsides, his cry is answered by MEDUSA'S HIDEOUS WAIL.

RUNNING FAST...

Perseus stumbles into a huge room of MIRRORS. Every inch of the walls are covered in reflective glass. He is suddenly lost amongst his OWN REFLECTION.

Perseus stumbles through the maze of mirrors, becoming more and more disoriented. He can hear the UNDULATING CREEP of Medusa's slither... she's closer.

He grips his sword and swings, smashing the mirrored walls.

Glass shards fly everywhere as he moves forward, splintering his way through the maze, trying to find his way out. Then the voice again.

MEDUSA'S VOICE

Look at me....

Perseus smashes the mirrors faster. Finally, he shatters one to find himself standing at the top of a HIDDEN STAIRCASE leading into the bowels of the villa. He takes it.

INT. BASEMENT FLOORS - CONTINUOUS

Deep beneath the villa now - the temperature dropping rapidly. Perseus can see his own breath as he reaches the bottom of the stairs, entering into --

A CELLAR. Instantly, his feet slide out from underneath him as his momentum sends him sliding across the floor.

Perseus lies there a beat, realizing he slid because the floor is covered by THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF GOLD COINS.

Perseus picks up a handful, tempted. Then he notices several 'STATUES' nearby, frozen forever stuffing coins into sacks. Perseus lets the cursed coins cascade through his fingers.

Perseus focuses on the room, looking for some advantage. *If he's going to kill her, it must happen here.*

TAPESTRIES hang on the walls, giving him an idea. Perseus grabs a TORCH, lighting the tapestries on fire one by one.

AT THE DOOR the sound of the SERPENT comes to a stop as -- MEDUSA appears.

We see her for the first time and it is shocking: from the waist up, Medusa is a beautiful woman with green eyes and a striking face. But protruding from her skull are --

A DOZEN withering SERPENTS, lashing and swaying, independent to her thoughts and movements, each having a mind of its own.

Medusa carries an intricately carved bow with a quiver of arrows. She has the glare of a hunter: focused, determined.

Before entering, she closes her eyes. THE SERPENTS ON HER HEAD draw up like Cobras, hissing, allowing her to 'sense' the room through their tongues.

Locked onto Perseus' scent, Medusa opens her eyes and the serpents return to their lashing. As she moves further into the room, we see the rest of her, revealing --

The long, flowing body of a snake, which slides effortlessly forward, almost as if her torso floated on air.

BEHIND A COLUMN

Perseus clutches his sword and his shield, sweating, waiting.

MEDUSA'S POV

SMOKE fills the chamber as the tapestries burn, obscuring her vision.

MEDUSA moves forward, closing her eyes, allowing the SERPENTS to guide her. They hiss, flicking their tongues.

Suddenly, Medusa turns and RELEASES AN ARROW.

WE STAY WITH THE ARROW as it travels through the thick smoke, striking the wall an inch from Perseus' head.

Medusa slithers forward, drawing a short sword from its scabbard. She stops where the arrow hit the wall, but Perseus is no longer there. She turns slowly, listening...

TWO FEET AWAY... Perseus stands behind a column, trying not to breathe. He can hear her just on the other side.

One of the snakes from Medusa's head stretches behind the column, only inches from Perseus' face.

He holds still as the snake's tongue flickers, sensing him, nearly touching his cheek... Instantly --

Medusa WHIRLS around the pillar, her blade cutting into the column, splitting it in two. But --

Perseus is already running. Medusa swings up her bow and releases an arrow. WHISH!

The ARROW strikes his shield. The force of the blow knocks him down, sending his shield rolling. He scrambles behind a pillar, out of her sight.

PERSEUS' EYES dart towards his shield, its polished interior facing him. In the shield, he sees MEDUSA'S REFLECTION.

Her reflection makes him recoil, but doesn't turn him to stone. Instead, HER IMAGE GLOWS brightly in the shield's center. Perseus remembers Ammon's words.

PERSEUS
Look at her, but don't see....
(an epiphany)
Reflection.

Perseus scrambles out of hiding, grabs his shield, then rolls behind another pillar.

ON MEDUSA

She slithers forward, her bow sweeping for a target. Then --

COINS rustle as she hears Perseus sprint for the door. She turns, releasing three arrows in lightning succession.

Then a crumpling thud, like a body hitting the floor.

Medusa snakes towards a FIGURE lying near the door, three arrows in its back.

She draws her sword again, letting out a ferocious cry as she slams down with all her might, decapitating what she instantly realizes is a STATUE.

SUDDENLY:

SHE GLIMPSES PERSEUS IN PROFILE, eyes turned away.

Realizing she's been tricked, she spins, striking with great force, but --

Her blow connects with *PERSEUS' SHIELD*, which had been propped onto a statue, reflecting PERSEUS' IMAGE.

FROM BEHIND HER:

Perseus leaps from a pillar, swinging his sword, eyes shut tight, CUTTING HER HEAD CLEAN OFF.

Medusa's body spasms as the tail thrashes wildly, sending gold coins flying everywhere.

Finally, the phantom nerve impulses die and the twisting, squirming tail stops moving. A silence falls over the room.

Perseus collapses to his knees. It is done.

EXT. MEDUSA'S VILLA - DAY

Perseus exits, holding Medusa's severed head up triumphantly towards the sky, defiant. Then, the ground begins to SHAKE.

In one swift motion, Perseus covers Medusa's head with his crimson tunic, keeping her deadly face hidden. Then he rushes forward as the pillars on either side of the entrance buckle, collapsing the villa's roof.

Perseus runs across the terrace as the entire villa crumbles, the island itself coming apart at the seams.

THE MIDDLE TERRACE

Perseus reaches Pegasus, mounting him in one leap. He spurs Pegasus towards the edge of the gardens. As Pegasus stretches his wings to take flight --

A STATUE falls from the terrace above, striking him. Pegasus brays in pain, his right wing injured, unable to fly.

Perseus guides Pegasus back around, but the black acid of the fallen fountains cascades down the steps, burning everything it touches, blocking their path. Then, Perseus remembers --

THE BOAT - anchored to the wooden dock below.

Perseus rides Pegasus across the island as it crumbles into the river, ripped apart at its core.

As they approach the shore, a ten-foot sinkhole slits the earth in front of them. Pegasus jumps, barely clearing the gap, landing upon the safety of THE DOCK.

Perseus looks back as the island itself sinks into the river, disappearing, washed clean from the face of the earth.

Only the dock remains, and the boat still anchored to it. A surreal sight. Perseus dismounts Pegasus, cautious.

The FIGURE, draped in a long cloak, turns. His face is a gentle one with full cheeks and a warm smile.

BOAT MAN
Are you in need of passage?

Perseus sighs relief at the sight of the harmless old man.

EXT. THE RIVER STYX - MOMENTS LATER

The boat drifts down river, swept into its flow.

The Boat Man dips his long oar into the dark waters, moving them towards shore. As he does this, Perseus notices something disturbing immersed in the oily-black river --

Thousands of HUMAN BODIES, silently writhe in pain. Like earthworms trapped in muddy clay, they stretch and reach in a fruitless attempt to escape the thick currents.

Perseus remembers this river. Knows its waters. This is where the Fates sent him to die.

Perseus looks back to the Boat Man, who's faced away from him, humming an eerie melody. Then Perseus hears dripping:

He looks down. From the Boat Man's robe, blood drips. A little at first, then more and more, like he is melting.

Doom sweeps over Perseus as he places his hand upon his sword, realizing this is CHARON, the Ferryman of the dead.

THE RIVER BANK

The boat hits shore with a thud. Pegasus fidgets, eager for solid ground. Charon doesn't turn for a long beat.

When he finally does, he's no longer the cherub-faced old man, rather a BLOODY SKELETON, the face of death.

Charon reaches his palm out from beneath his robes revealing a hand of bone, his voice altered, evil.

CHARON
Payment upon arrival. A single coin.

Perseus reaches into his pocket for his lucky coin, then remembers it was lost back at the Fates.

PERSEUS
I... I have no coin.

The hollow-eyed skeleton looks to the river.

CHARON
Then the currents you will join.

The wind and mist pick up, swirling around Charon in an unnatural manner.

Around the edges of the boat, the Dead reach up from the Styx, eager to pull Perseus into the river.

Charon moves closer, the black fog engulfing Perseus, who backs up against Pegasus.

Perseus' eyes flash regret as he thinks of the gold coins left at Medusa's. The wind screams louder, overwhelming Perseus' senses. Perseus has only one thought:

PERSEUS
Andromeda....

Perseus unconsciously touches his only connection to her - the necklace. He stares down at the image of her father... etched on a coin of pure gold.

As the Dead grab hold of him, Perseus pulls off the necklace and stretches out his hand.

INSTANTLY: the black fog disappears along with the wind and mist. The hands of the Dead slip back into the dark river.

Charon grips the necklace in his fingers and slips it beneath his dark robes. Then steps aside, allowing Perseus and Pegasus to pass as if nothing had happened.

CHARON
I await your return.

ON THE SHORE

Perseus leads Pegasus off. Perseus looks back, but --

Charon's boat is gone. Only the black currents of the river run past, carrying with them the memory of their crossing.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DUSK

A confident Perseus crests the ridge as the SUN sets in the West, casting a golden hue over the cliff face.

Perseus rides up to their camp where Niko sits. Andromeda is nowhere to be seen. Niko sees Perseus, tries to stand.

NIKO
Perseus! Turn back!

Suddenly, a BLINDING LIGHT fills Perseus' vision as a spear strikes his shield. He flies from Pegasus, losing his shield and the tunic holding Medusa's head.

CALABUS AND FIVE WARRIORS ride from the tree line. Barenea steps from the brush, holding Andromeda firmly in his grasp, her mouth gagged. Kadmus behind him.

PERSEUS rises, drawing his sword. Calabus and his Warriors dismount, fanning out around him.

Perseus looks to Niko. He now sees that Niko's hands are tied to a stake in the ground. Calabus walks closer. He stares into Perseus' eyes, neither man willing to look away.

CALABUS
Who are you?

PERSEUS
A soldier of Phoenicia.

Calabus is silent, his eyes cold.

CALABUS
How pitiful for you that your city is already dead.

Perseus LUNGES for the tunic containing Medusa's head, but Calabus' sword pierces it, staking it to the ground.

Perseus looks up to see Calabus kick him in the face full force, knocking him back.

Pegasus rears up, kicking his powerful hooves, but two Warriors throw a NET over him, fixing it to a large boulder. Pegasus struggles, but the boulder holds firm.

Perseus recovers and stands tall - only ten feet between himself and the SHEER CLIFF. He breathes deep, gripping his sword. Then, the warriors come at him --

Perseus blocks the FIRST WARRIOR'S blow, then turns and swings at a SECOND and THIRD, striking one in the arm and the other in the leg. He then pivots --

AND DRIVES HIS SWORD into a FOURTH'S chest, killing him.

The warriors pause. Perseus is a different man now. He and his sword are one.

But the warriors aren't afraid. They attack in unison, swinging their swords at Perseus, who can barely block their weighty blows.

Pegasus watches as Perseus is cornered against the edge of the cliff. The mighty horse fights harder against the net, slowly pulling the boulder along the ground.

The horse picks up speed, dragging the net and boulder, determined to help his rider.

THE WARRIORS turn as they hear the charging horse.

PERSEUS understands what Pegasus is about to do.

PERSEUS
Pegasus! No!

But Pegasus keeps coming. At the last moment, Perseus slips OFF THE CLIFF, grabbing a root as the horse reaches the stunned Warriors, bulldozing them over.

TIME SLOWS as Pegasus tumbles off the cliff. The Warriors, entangled in the net, are carried over the cliff with him. They fall past Perseus, splashing into the Styx.

A beat until Pegasus breaks the surface of the river below, free of the net. The white horse struggles to swim, but the hands of the Dead wrap around him, dragging him beneath the black waters. Pegasus disappears.

PERSEUS
No!!

But there's no time to mourn. Perseus pulls himself from the cliff to find --

CALABUS waiting.

Anger takes over. Perseus charges Calabus, but a WARRIOR intercedes. Perseus deflects a strike, then swings. The warrior raises his sword to block the blow, but --

Perseus spins, slashes him in the back, and cuts the tie that binds Niko. Instantly, Niko recovers one of the fallen warrior's swords and stands abreast of Perseus.

They face Calabus, Barenea, and his only remaining warrior.

A moment, then Calabus swings at Niko, who drops to his knees, raising his sword to block the strike. The blow forces Niko's sword aside, cutting open his left arm.

Niko screams in pain as Calabus' elbow crashes into his skull, knocking him unconscious.

PERSEUS reacts in a blind rage. SPARKS fly as his sword meets Calabus'. But Calabus uses his sword's edge to catch Perseus' blade, forcing it to the ground.

Calabus' right arm swings up, catching Perseus below the jaw. Then a left hook sends a stunned Perseus onto the muddy ground. Then he kicks him, hard and brutal.

Andromeda struggles against her restraints.

ANDROMEDA
Let him live! Please!

Calabus looks at Andromeda's pained expression, then down at Perseus, who glares back at him in hate.

He grabs Perseus and drags him to the tunic holding Medusa's head. He draws his knife, stabbing the tip into the satchel.

CALABUS
(off Medusa's head)
It's said that her blood is a toxin.
Some say the worst death imaginable.

Andromeda breaks free from Barenea, rushing Calabus.

ANDROMEDA
No!

Calabus turns and strikes Andromeda, knocking her down.

Enraged, Perseus manages to leap to his feet, but Calabus knocks him back down.

Calabus then leans over Perseus, plunging the tip of the poisoned knife into his shoulder. He twists the blade. Perseus swallows the pain, refusing to scream.

CALABUS

It seems fate has turned against you, soldier.

Calabus picks up Perseus' sword. As he does, he notices the etchings on the side.

CALABUS

(reading the sword)

Lightning from the highest power, thrown from the highest tower.

Calabus picks up Perseus' shield. He throws Andromeda across his horse. Then he mounts it, tying the tunic containing Medusa's head to his saddle.

CALABUS

Die knowing that Andromeda is mine to do with as I please.

Calabus spins his horse to leave. Kadmus, Bareneca, and the remaining Warrior follow.

Andromeda and Perseus' eyes connect before she vanishes with Calabus into the Forest of Darkness.

Perseus lies there, withering in pain. His best friend lying comatose beside him. He's lost everything: Andromeda, Ammon, Pegasus, Niko, his weapons... and beyond that, he's delivered the ultimate power into the hands of his enemy.

Blood runs down his face as he looks towards the heavens for answers. None come. He blacks out.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CLIFF SIDE - NIGHT

Perseus lies on the ground, twisting as the poison ravages his body and mind.

Then, we HEAR noise O.S., the sound of footsteps. A pair of BOOTS stop next to him. We can't see who they belong to, but rough hands clasp Perseus, dragging him off.

LATER - BY A FIRE

Perseus now beside it. His face has been wiped clean. Niko lies nearby, a blanket over him.

Perseus stirs. He opens his eyes, confusion on his face. He doesn't know where he is, but more than that, he can't understand why --

Ammon sits over him. They stare at each other for a moment.

PERSEUS
... Is this the next life?

Ammon shakes his head, no.

PERSEUS
But I saw you die... ?

AMMON
Perhaps. Or perhaps you don't understand what you saw.

Perseus grins bitterly. This is a hallucination, but he hasn't the strength to fight it.

PERSEUS
He has Medusa's head.

AMMON
It was never Medusa you sought. You were searching for faith.

PERSEUS
Faith? What's left to believe in?

AMMON
Yourself, Perseus.

PERSEUS
Enough of this delusion... Let me die.

Perseus starts to drift, the pain taking control of him.

AMMON
No. Not before I tell you a story.
(beat)
Many years ago, a stranger arrived in the city of Argos where he fell in love with the King's daughter. When she became pregnant, an oracle warned her son would someday kill the King. Fearful, the King pierced the boy's arms with weights and had him taken to sea to be drowned. But Poseidon led a fisherman to save him. The Fisherman then brought the boy to Phoenicia where he grew to become a man.

A long pause. Perseus understands the implication.

AMMON (CONT'D)

Your scars. The oasis wouldn't heal them because they were touched by a god.

PERSEUS

How could you know this? You're not even real. You're dead.

AMMON

I know it because it was the stranger who sent me to watch over you.

PERSEUS

The stranger?

AMMON

Your father... Zeus.

Perseus stares at him, unbelieving.

PERSEUS

... That can't be... gods have never walked this earth.

AMMON

Haven't they?

SUDDENLY: Ammon stretches to his full height, TRANSFORMING from the man we've grown used to... to another.

His beard disappears as Ammon ages backwards. His skin becomes smooth and young. His muscles lean and taunt. His eyes as blue as the sky. He now stands as --

THE GOD, APOLLO

He has the same visage from the statue in Medusa's garden, and the one above the palace bath. Perseus is stunned.

APOLLO

You must continue on.

PERSEUS

You'll help me?

APOLLO

... I can't. This conflict must be settled by a mortal's hand.

(heavy beat)

You must face him alone.

PERSEUS
But how? I have nothing now.

Apollo leans close, his voice thunders with conviction.

APOLLO
You have your destiny. Fulfill it.

Perseus hears his words, but the odds seem insurmountable.

APOLLO
As we speak, Andromeda's life-thread
frays. If she dies, hope dies along with
her child... along with your child.

Perseus blinks, unsure if he heard him right.

APOLLO
Yes. It's your child she will carry.

A deep emotion explodes through him. He summons all his strength, he struggles to his feet. But he falters, reaching a hand to Apollo for help, but --

APOLLO IS GONE.

Perseus shakes his head, looks around, disoriented, wondering if he imagined the whole encounter.

He pulls himself from the ground once again, then moves to Niko. Using a satchel, he pours water down Niko's throat. Then he lays another blanket across his friend, and turns to face the Forest of Darkness.

EXT. FOREST OF DARKNESS - NIGHT

Deep in the forest. Wind blows through the endless branches. Perseus reaches a point where a giant tree has fallen, exposing the forest floor to the night sky.

MOONLIGHT illuminates the wild reeds that grow among the decayed skeleton of the dropped tree. Suddenly, to his right, he spots the silhouette of a --

THEOTEPA perched on a tree stump, ready to pounce. Perseus freezes, scanning the trees: where there's one, there's more.

Perseus tries to keep still, but he's overtaken by pain and stumbles. He looks up, expecting to be devoured --

But the Theotepa hasn't moved. Perseus cautiously moves closer, realizing it has been turned to stone.

As Perseus reaches the creature, he sees --

A pack of Theotepas, stone-frozen in attack stances. An ironic smile crosses his face. Calabus has cleared a path.

Perseus moves past the pack. As he leaves the moonlight behind, he becomes a SILHOUETTE... just another shadow lost in a forest full of them.

EXT. WASTELANDS - DAY

Perseus shields his eyes against the brutal sun. He looks out at the endless horizon. Nothing.

Beads of sweat gather on his temple. His clothes soaked with blood from his wounded shoulder. But it's the splinters in his mind he's fighting now... Medusa's poison is taking hold.

He stumbles on against a growing wind. That's when a HAND touches his shoulder. He turns, startled to find himself --

BACK IN PHOENICIA

Niko stands before him the night they decided to leave. But Perseus is still covered in blood, battered.

NIKO

I leave at midnight, from the South Wall.
With or without you.

Perseus is confused for a moment, finding his bearings.

Then Niko turns to walk away, revealing a gapping wound in the back of his skull. Perseus recoils in shock.

BACK TO:

THE WASTELANDS

Perseus steps back, realizing he's still in the Wastelands. He takes a few steps, but finds his path blocked by --

QUEEN CASSIOPEIA

She hands him the SEALED PARCHMENT. As he takes it, she grabs his hand in a forceful grip.

CASSIOPEIA

Your word.

PERSEUS

My word, Queen.

Cassiopeia pulls her hands away, revealing that her wrists are SLIT -- blood draining from them.

Perseus stumbles back, fighting the delusions. The WIND grows STRONG, like the chaos in his mind. Sand beats his eyes. He holds his hands in front of him, when --

FLASH TO MOUNT TROKAS

Perseus runs his fingers through Andromeda's hair, gathering a strand to cut. Then, SOMETHING bites him. Andromeda turns - HER HAIR a living nest of SERPENTS. She lunges at him.

BACK TO:

THE WASTELANDS

Perseus falls to his knees. Overwhelmed, he clutches his head, no longer able to fight the poison.

PERSEUS

Get out of my head! OUT!

The SANDSTORM whips around him, blinding him. Finally, he can go no further. He falls into the sand. A long moment as he lies there. Then a sound, like heavy breathing.

He opens his eyes to find a GRIFFIN towering over him, its mane flowing in the wind. Perseus has no strength to fight.

PERSEUS

Go ahead. End it.

The Griffin's mouth opens wide, exposing razor-sharp teeth.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE UP ON:

A LONG SHOT of the Wastelands. Silhouetted against the sky, the Griffin carries an unconscious Perseus cradled in its mouth, like a mother would a cub.

EXT. OASIS - NIGHT

WATER SPLASHES as the Griffin drags an unconscious Perseus into the waters of the pool. The Griffin returns to shore as Perseus sinks beneath the surface.

A long beat as AIR BUBBLES pop on the pool, until --

Perseus BREAKS the surface, gasping for air.

THE TWO GRIFFINS watch as Perseus staggers to the shore, racked by a series of harsh coughs. On his hands and knees, he vomits BLACK BLOOD, excising Medusa's poison.

Finally, the heaves subside. Perseus stares for a moment at the bloody spew, an idea forming.

He takes out his dagger. Slides it through the poisoned blood. Carefully slips it back into its sheath.

Then he rolls to his side, collapsing. He looks up to the two Griffins, whose black eyes stare back at him, a silent message behind them - *keep going*.

CUT TO:

EXT. PHOENICIA - NORTH TOWER - DAY

Cassiopeia prays, kneeling before an alter to Zeus. Suddenly, a MESSENGER bursts into the room.

MESSENGER
They're retreating!

Cassiopeia jumps to her feet.

EXT. PALACE TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Cassiopeia and the Oracle watch as Calabus' army withdraws from the ravaged wall, by the thousands, returning to their sprawling encampment.

CASSIOPEIA
It's a miracle.

The Oracle's grim expression says otherwise.

ORACLE
They're not retreating. They're regrouping. Calabus has returned.

Cassiopeia grows quiet, an unspoken question between them.

ORACLE
Yes... The Princess is with him.

This news hangs over her like a death shroud.

INT. CALABUS' TENT - DAY

Calabus kneels before the effigy of HERA. He looks to her as if she were real. The mood is solemn, holy.

CALABUS

(to Hera)

For years I've lived behind this mask,
ashamed of what Zeus had done to me.

Calabus begins to unhook his metal mask.

CALABUS

I reasoned this face a curse. My looks a
reminder of my fall from grace.

(beat)

Now I look at the world and see myself.
This earth a reflection of my glory, not
his. Instead of punishing me, he set me
free.

Calabus takes off his mask, revealing --

A GROTESQUE FACE. Scars cover every inch; his right cheek
bone protrudes partially through the skin; maggots eat away
at it; one eye socket is crushed; his hair grows only in thin
wisps on his bloody scalp; a gruesome sight.

CALABUS

I have won.

ACROSS THE VAST ROOM

Andromeda wakes with a start. She finds herself on a bed,
the bounty of Calabus' conquest lying around her.

Calabus approaches, no longer wearing his mask.

CALABUS

Welcome home.

Andromeda looks away from his horrifying face.

Calabus turns to the entrance, signaling to his servants.
Suddenly, the side of the tent is raised, revealing --

A VIEW OF PHOENICIA AND THE BATTLEFIELD

Calabus' army stretches before the city like a swarm of
locust, a legion of pure destructive splendor.

CALABUS moves closer, his grotesque visage repelling her. As
he speaks, he binds her wrists with a leather strap.

CALABUS

I want you to watch Phoenicia burn. Once
she's ground to dust, you'll die upon her
ashes.

Andromeda spits in his face. Calabus yanks her from the bed. He drags her across the floor to Hera's statue, where he binds her to the Goddesses' feet.

ANDROMEDA

Perseus will come for me... he'll find a way.

CALABUS

I'm afraid not, Princess. There is no way back from the dead.

With that, Calabus turns and exits. Tears stream from Andromeda's eyes. Horror mixed with hopelessness.

EXT. PHOENICIA - CONTINUOUS

Calabus' army ERUPTS IN CHEERS as Calabus emerges from his tent. He holds Perseus' majestic sword and shield.

For the first time, Calabus' face is exposed to his men. A HUSH falls over them. Even his murderous, bloodthirsty men are taken aback by his appearance.

Calabus mounts his black steed. Speared into the ground next to his horse is a decorative spear, atop of which is the covered head of Medusa. Calabus grabs it, slides the spear through a loop on his saddle.

Barenea rides up next to him, armed to the hilt.

BARENEA

(off his army)

They are ready.

With Barenea at his side, Calabus rides through the ranks of his army, which forms up behind him. It's the most impressive, deadly force ever assembled.

When Calabus reaches the front, he raises his sword.

CALABUS

Burn it to the ground!

His men scream, beating weapons against shields.

ON THE CITY WALL

General Rena stands on the battlements. His battered soldiers surround him. They know this is their final hour.

RENA

Positions!

(fearless pride)

Today we see the afterlife!

With dignity, the Phoenician soldiers take their positions.

ON CALABUS, sword raised high, he turns back toward the city where a vile, stinking smoke clings low to the ground, swirling in small circles as if alive.

Calabus watches it for a moment, lost in it, sensing something within it. Then --

A FIGURE emerges from the smoke.

It's PERSEUS.

He stands alone against Calabus' entire army, brandishing his only remaining weapon, his dagger. His wounds are healed, his face defiant. His faith whole and incorruptible.

INT. CALABUS' TENT

Andromeda's face fills with hope at the sight of Perseus.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Calabus looks to Bareneia.

CALABUS

(off army)

Wait until I've finished with him.

Bareneia nods. Calabus spurs his horse forward. As he does, Kadmus breaks the line, his horse blocking Calabus.

KADMUS

(off his army, re: Perseus)

Send them to feed on this one. You mustn't fight him.

Calabus bristles from the insult, angry.

CALABUS

He is nothing.

KADMUS

He slew Medusa.

CALABUS

And I have her head.

KADMUS
Then use it. But do not face him.

Kadmus leans in close, lowering his voice.

KADMUS
Tread carefully. He is the only one who
can stop us now.

Calabus' face grows dim. Kadmus reacts to this, fearful.

CALABUS
Us? There is no us.

Calabus takes Perseus' sword and thrusts it through Kadmus' chest, lifting him out of his saddle. Then he throws Kadmus writhing to the ground, bleeding, dying.

CALABUS
There is only me.

Calabus spurs his horse forward.

PERSEUS' POV

Calabus seems to GLOW as all else grows pale and opaque. Behind him his army stretches across the plain, death incarnate.

Finally, CALABUS is there. He takes the spear with Medusa's covered head and stakes it deep into the ground. Then he dismounts, slapping his horse, which bolts away.

The two men stand before each other, a spectacle watched by thousands. Medusa's head between them: the prize.

Perseus shows no fear, no hesitation.

CALABUS
Do you really believe you can stop me?

Perseus smiles a confident, deadly grin.

PERSEUS
Yes... It is my destiny.

Calabus' face turns angry. Instantly, he CHARGES. Perseus sidesteps Calabus' sword thrust, narrowly avoiding it.

Perseus avoids a second blow, agile and adept. But Calabus stays on him, closing the gap.

Perseus and Calabus exchange blow after blow, brutal and relentless. Somehow Perseus holds his own with only a knife. Then, Perseus scissor-kicks Calabus' legs out from under him.

Calabus falls. He's slow to get up. He realizes the shield is slowing him down. He throws it aside as Perseus angles towards Medusa's head.

But Calabus attacks, moving with super-human speed and quickness. His sword slashes out at Perseus, who jumps back, a long red wound appearing across his chest.

THE HORDES behind Calabus let out a ROAR, reacting to the fight like a chorus, shouting their approval.

CALABUS' SWORD narrowly misses Perseus again. But this time, Perseus slips under Calabus' overstretched arm, slashing his dagger across Calabus' ribs between two plates of his armor.

Calabus pauses a moment, feeling his side wound, which bleeds black. *Something is wrong.* He looks to Perseus.

PERSEUS
(off his dagger)
Medusa's blood.

Calabus looks up to Medusa's shrouded head. He's been infected by her blood.

CALABUS
(charging him)
AAHHH!!!

Calabus thrusts his sword. Perseus recovers his discarded SHIELD in time to block the blow.

Calabus is relentless. He feigns a sword thrust, but instead kicks out, striking Perseus' shin, sending him sprawling.

CALABUS' FOOT slams down on Perseus' wrist, causing him to drop his dagger.

But Perseus swings the edge of his shield into Calabus' leg. SNAP! We hear the tendon in Calabus' right knee go. Calabus screams in pain.

ON CALABUS' FACE. He shakes his head, as if clearing it of cobwebs - Medusa's blood is taking effect. As it does, we see something in him we've never seen before: a sense of mortality. Calabus is aware, for the first time, that he could actually die.

CALABUS
This ends now.

Calabus turns towards his troops, pointing his sword toward the city.

ANGLE ON HIS ARMY

Barenea yells the call to CHARGE.

CATAPULTS launch flaming cisterns; CALVARY raise their lances and CHARGE; a HAIL OF ARROWS darkens the sky as the Phoenicians along the wall raise their shields to block them.

PERSEUS recovers his dagger, standing to face Calabus as thousands of men charge towards him.

That's when Calabus suddenly stops, taking a step back, Medusa's poison fully gripping his mind.

CALABUS' POV

Perseus glows with the intensity of the sun. Flanked behind Perseus, Calabus also sees:

AN ENDLESS ARMY OF THE DEAD - all victims of Calabus' conquests, his past sins rising to support this soldier of Phoenicia.

PERSEUS pauses, confused by Calabus' hesitation.

Calabus shakes his head, looks to Perseus - who now stands alone - the hallucination broken.

Calabus charges. PERSEUS reacts perfectly. As Calabus swings, Perseus avoids the blow and lunges for THE SPEAR WITH MEDUSA'S HEAD.

CALABUS' ARMY is almost upon them, thundering in intensity.

PERSEUS grabs the spear. Lifts it high above him, and pulls the string that loosens the veil, exposing Medusa's head.

CALABUS
No!!!

Calabus shields his eyes, turning away as Medusa's visage faces his advancing army.

MEDUSA'S severed HEAD comes alive, the SERPENTS hissing as her eyes glow blood red. A monstrous, hideous image.

AND THEN:

Like a wave flowing backwards, CALABUS' ARMY is turned to stone: CHARGING HORSES are suspended in place; ARCHERS frozen mid-action; SOLDIERS with swords stand immobile.

Silence suddenly reigns where moments before there was chaos.

WIDE ON THE BATTLEFIELD

Perseus stands tall, a lone figure facing AN ARMY OF STATUES arrayed before the gates of the great city.

ALONG THE WALL

Cheers rise from the Phoenicians, who are overwhelmed and stunned by what they've just witnessed.

But CALABUS still lives. He races back through the stone statues of his defeated army, refusing to look back.

PERSEUS spies the remains of a flaming cistern. He flings Medusa's head into the flames, which flare brighter.

Then Perseus recovers his sword, spotting Calabus in the distance... A horrible thought crosses his mind.

PERSEUS
Andromeda....

FRANTIC...

Perseus grabs his sword and gives chase. But Calabus is far ahead. Desperation builds upon his face, until --

PEGASUS soars from the sky, swooping down towards the battlefield, towards Perseus. The horse escaped the river.

As Pegasus lands, Perseus catches his mane, and in one fluid motion, he's quickly upon the horse's back.

Perseus rides Pegasus through the stone army, bee-lining for Calabus who angles for his tent. Just as he's about to enter, Pegasus reaches him. Perseus leaps off --

TACKLING CALABUS, from behind. They tumble into --

CALABUS' TENT

Landing near the STATUE OF HERA - just feet from Andromeda. Perseus breaks free and lifts his sword. But, WHAM! Calabus strikes Perseus across the face.

Calabus hits Perseus again, knocking his sword away. Calabus then grabs a knife from his wrist and rushes Andromeda.

When he reaches her, he swings, but Andromeda blocks his thrust with the leather strap, cutting it in half, freeing her. In an instant, she pulls the ivory pin from her hair, driving it into Calabus' throat.

Undaunted, Calabus rushes forward. His second thrust sinks deep into her side. Time stands still....

PERSEUS
NO!!!

Perseus tackles Calabus. Like an animal, Perseus swings, and swings, and swings, connecting with hit after hit.

But Calabus manages to get his powerful fingers gripped around Perseus' throat. Suffocating, Perseus shifts his feet, creating momentum as he angles them towards the statue of Hera.

BAM! They tumble into it. Calabus' head collides with the statue - the full weight of both men behind the blow. Blood pours from Calabus' scalp as his fingers go limp.

He falls. Calabus is dead.

Calabus' blood seeps over the floor, staining the statue's base. Perseus looks up to Hera's stoic face.

PERSEUS
I give you your son.

ON HERA'S STATUE

Her marble eyes SUDDENLY OPEN, the statue COMING TO LIFE.

HERA
And I give you destruction.

Perseus jerks back, shocked. Reflexively, he grabs his sword and strikes the statue at its base.

A CRACK spiderwebs up through the statue. It begins to CRUMBLE into a million pieces, falling over Calabus' body.

As the statue hits the ground, the earth itself starts to shake as a FISSURE rips open the soil.

Like a scar upon the earth, the fissure tears across the battlefield towards the ocean, where it smashes into the surf, traveling out to sea.

DEEP IN THE OCEAN

A REEF covered in barnacles and sea life. The FISSURE races across the ocean floor, splitting the reef open.

Like blood from a wound in the very planet, MOLTEN ROCK boils forth as a line of magma meets the cool water, creating a maelstrom of energy, preparing the way for a God's wrath, preparing the way for *THE KRAKEN*.

EXT. THE PALACE - DAY

The gates open wide as Perseus, carrying Andromeda, enters. Cassiopeia is there to meet him. Andromeda hangs onto life by only a thread.

INT. THE GREAT HALL - CONTINUOUS

Cassiopeia leads Perseus into the hall where the Oracle waits. He directs Perseus to lay Andromeda on the table.

All around them the statues of the gods stare down, silent witnesses to the moment's sadness.

PERSEUS

Can you help her?

ORACLE

I can only ask.

Behind them, heavy winds blow the balcony doors open, as if beckoning to Perseus. Perseus turns to the door, leaving the Oracle to his prayers.

EXT. TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Perseus emerges near the statue of Zeus. He sees a BLACK STORM rolling in across the ocean. A THUNDERING BOOM accompanies it, a thunder born of the ocean depths, like a hollow echo from some primordial cave.

Soldiers litter the terraces of the palace, terror-stricken. Perseus then sees what they see --

AN IMMENSE BLACK SHAPE

-- moving through the ocean, displacing millions of tons of water, sending massive waves breaking onto the beach.

ORACLE (O.S.)

It comes.

Perseus turns to find the Oracle beside him.

ORACLE
The Kraken. Hera's vengeance.

THE STORM

intensifies as HURRICANE FORCE WINDS break across the ocean.

THE CITY is in chaos: the wind so fierce that it literally erodes the city's walls as if they were made of sand.

PHOENICIAN SOLDIERS are swept off the battlements. CITIZENS rush for the shelter of their homes.

AT THE PALACE

PERSEUS braces himself against the raging storm, which only seems to build with every second. He watches as the BLACK FORM comes closer... bringing with it the city's end.

Then, a hundred yards from the shore, the FORM settles. For a moment, the storm seems to cease as the furious wind and rain focus upon the point where the leviathan will appear.

THE KRAKEN

emerges from the water like a vision of the Apocalypse, an amalgamation of a variety of primordial creatures.

Its features are hard to distinguish as the blustering tempest swirls around it, keeping it hidden in the chaos and hell of the churning ocean.

We can only make out eyes that burn hate, the flash of deformed, clawed hands, and an arched, repelling visage, indescribable in nature, in violation of it.

AT THE PALACE

Perseus wedges himself between the balcony's railing and the SHRINE OF ZEUS. The winds erode the shrine, with the exception of Zeus' statue, which stands firm, lightning bolts clenched in his marble fists.

That's when Perseus realizes that there's one thing missing from the Kraken's onslaught: *lightning*. He has an epiphany --

He draws his sword, running his fingers over its etchings. A calmness falls over him as he remembers Calabus' words.

PERSEUS

Lightning from the highest power, thrown
from the highest tower.

He looks up. The palace spires climb into the sky above.

THE KRAKEN

The world trembles as the great destroyer moves for shore, as
if a living cyclone had risen from the sea.

PHOENICIA'S STREETS

Hysteria abounds as the Kraken approaches. This is the wrath
of Hera made flesh. The end of the world.

PERSEUS emerges at the top of the tallest spire, which sways,
threatening to collapse. He looks out at the Kraken, which
is almost upon the city. This is it.

He grips his sword with one hand, holding it high.

THE KRAKEN turns toward the palace, rising out of the water.

PERSEUS collects the last of his strength and --

THROWS HIS SWORD TOWARDS THE KRAKEN. The sword sails end-
over-end through the air until it TRANSFORMS into --

A tremendous BOLT OF LIGHTNING.

We've seen this image before, on the etchings in the corridor
of the Fates, engraved into the side of the sword itself.

The LIGHTNING BOLT strikes the Kraken.

The impact creates a blinding FLASH as bright as if the sun
exploded, forcing everyone to shield their eyes.

It's followed by a SONIC BOOM that thunders across the land,
literally knocking everyone to the ground.

PERSEUS' EYES readjust to see the leviathan tumbling back
into the ocean, mortally wounded.

As the sea swallows the creature, the tempest subsides. An
eerie calm remains... as if someone turned off the switch to
Armageddon, leaving a shattered city in its wake.

The sun breaks from behind the clouds.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANDROMEDA'S BED CHAMBER - PALACE - DAY

Andromeda lies in a bed of pillows. Candles are everywhere, illuminating the room in an angelic glow. The Oracle looms over her, along with her mother, praying.

EXT. TERRACE - SAME

Perseus stands alone, looking over the army of STONE STATUES that circle the city's gates.

The city itself is full of activity. Phoenicians congregate comfortably for the first time since the siege began. Even amongst the rubble, one can sense a new hope building.

FOOTSTEPS echo behind Perseus. He turns, to find --

NIKO standing before him.

PERSEUS
You're alive.

NIKO
... By inches.

They embrace.

NIKO
The Princess... ?

Perseus shakes his head, his sense of sadness rekindled.

INT. ANDROMEDA'S ROOM - PALACE - SAME

Dark, solemn. Andromeda lies in bed, near death. The Oracle and Cassiopeia at her side, both in silent prayer.

A STRANGER enters the room.

Cassiopeia and the Oracle look up when they hear footsteps. We can't see his face - but the stranger twirls a COIN in his hand, which seems to glide effortless across his fingers.

The stranger moves past them without a word, then places the coin, which we now SEE is Perseus' lucky coin - lost at the Fates - in Andromeda's palm.

Then he leans down and kisses her forehead. As the stranger raises up, we reveal --

ZEUS.

But we recognize him not from the statues we've seen, but from his piercing yellow eyes, and the simple clothes of a fisherman...

The fisherman who pulled young Perseus from the sea.

Zeus looks to the Queen and the Oracle. Not a word is spoken, they feel the presence of divinity.

Zeus turns to leave, but before he does --

Perseus and Niko enter from the terrace, opening the room to sunlight. Perseus stops, astonished.

The two men stare at one another for a quiet moment. Something inside Perseus clicks; we see it on his face. He realizes for the first time who he truly is.

Zeus turns and walks away, not able to hold his son until the next life. Perseus is immobile, overcome.

NIKO

Who was that man?

A long beat before Perseus can answer.

PERSEUS

... My father.

Then Perseus' eyes shift to the Princess.

SUNLIGHT streaming in from the terrace catches his COIN. Suddenly, a tiny coil of light jumps from it, working its way through Andromeda's body, which glows from the inside out.

Everyone watches in awed silence as Andromeda opens her eyes. She holds a long stare with Perseus.

ANDROMEDA

... Where am I?

PERSEUS

Home.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PHOENICIA - ONE YEAR LATER - DAY

The city has been restored to its former glory. Its massive fortifications rebuilt, its fields recovering.

An IMMENSE crowd has gathered before the palace, waiting in hopeful anticipation.

EXT. TERRACE - SAME

WE PAN ACROSS a windswept terrace, the blue Mediterranean visible in the distance, until we reach a FIGURE praying before a SHRINE TO ZEUS. The figure stands, revealing --

Perseus. Just then, a winded Niko rushes onto the balcony.

NIKO
He has arrived.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PALACE - DAY

The crowd waits. A thrill suddenly shudders through them as the doors on the balcony high above swing open.

EXT. PALACE BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Perseus appears at the edge of the balcony, holding --

A NEWBORN CHILD high above his head. The Phoenicians below erupt in celebration at the sight of the infant.

Niko, the Oracle, and General Rena emerge behind Perseus.

INT. BEDCHAMBER - SAME

Andromeda watches from a bed of pillows. Cassiopeia wipes her brow. Andromeda's face glows with the beauty of a new mother, buoyed by the cheers of her people.

ON THE BALCONY

Perseus smiles, looking at his son, looking over his city.

OUTSTRETCHED IN HIS ARMS

The infant cries. Alive. That's when we notice the child's unusual eyes, as yellow as the Phoenician sun.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END