

THE BEGINNING OF CIVILIZATION

Mythologies Told True

Book 3

DIONYSUS
AND HESTIA

Rise and Fall of the Olympians

Second Edition

Dennis Wammack

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Book 3. *The Beginning of Civilization: Mythologies Told True*

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Dionysus and Hestia: Rise and Fall of the Olympians, Second Edition

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TELCHINES: Dexithea, Makelo, Halia.

EAST: Azura, Seth, Typhon, Iasion, Endymion.

OTHER: Centaur Chiron, Charon, Hotep, Petra, Persephone.

###

Jin Jiyan Azadi!
Slava Ukraini!
Long Live the Titans!
Peace.

ELDER OLYMPIANS: Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, Zeus
OLYMPIANS: Apollo, Ares, Artemis, Athena, Aphrodite, Dionysus, Hermes,
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DIONYSUS AND HESTIA

Rise and Fall of the Olympians

1. Hestia

Year 100, 4th month

Zeus and his Olympian brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters were in full party mode. Aphrodite was gyrating on the table, her clothes strewn on the heads of her adoring admirers. Poseidon would go first.

Two floors below, their leader, Hestia, quietly stared over the beautiful, peaceful Port Olympus Harbor. She had problems. *Nothing worked out as I planned. Well, no. Actually, everything worked out as I planned. It's just the unintended consequences. I didn't look far enough ahead. Did you know, Grandmother Kiya?—that I would kill you and your Titan children and then I would have it all? Of course, you did. You knew it all the time. And now that we have it all, how do we keep it and whatever shall we do with it?*

She walked to the sofa, sat down, and cradled Philyra's head in her lap.

Philyra murmured, "You're too quiet, Chief. What's our problem?"

"I thought Kiya would have had some kind of retribution planned. She had to have considered that her little Gigante uprising against me would fail. It wasn't like her to not have a backup plan."

"I don't know, Chief. She was grooming you to be Queen of Everything. Maybe she just accepted her death as the way things had to be."

"WHO TOLD YOU THAT?"

"I thought you knew. All the Elder Titans did. Themis and Mnemosyne had better organizational skills than you, but they weren't mean enough to manage this place. By the time Queen Kiya knew how evil you were and couldn't be changed, it was too late. But in the beginning, she was doing everything she could to help you. Feel better, now?"

Puzzled, Hestia asked no one in particular, "She was grooming me?"

She sat thinking. "Find Dionysus. Have him in my office midday tomorrow."

Upstairs, Ares joined in.

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The Consultant

Late the next morning, Philyra found Dionysus sitting at his favorite waterside table drinking wine with Heracles. She smiled and said, “Hello. I’m Philyra, Chief-of-Chiefs Hestia’s Executive Assistant. She commands your presence in her office immediately.”

Excited, Heracles asked, “Can I come, too?!”

Dionysus raised his hand for silence and replied, “Invite your master to join Heracles and me for midday meal tomorrow. Wine and cheese on the dock will do wonders for her disposition.”

Philyra replied, “Olympian Hestia doesn’t like to mingle with the lower classes nor have her demands declined. Come on, Titan Dionysus! Don’t make my life any harder. Go meet with her. Bring your friend.”

Dionysus sat silent for a moment and then replied, “Down here! Tell her that I command it.”

Philyra laughed. “I didn’t become Executive Assistant to the Chief-of-Chiefs of Port Olympus by being stupid, Titan. I will convey your deep regrets of being overly intimidated—no, that won’t work—how about, you want her to come mingle with the people she is governing so she can get to know them better? That sounds good.”

Now, Dionysus laughed. “She doesn’t deserve you, Oceanid Philyra. You should have run away with your sisters when you could have.”

“I have a physically deformed but otherwise beautiful son somewhere in Tartarus and I am the assistant to the psychologically deformed but unbelievably powerful oldest daughter of Cronus who commands the fifteenth floor of the greatest structure ever built. I’m doing the best I can with what I’ve got to work with. I’ll go see if I can convince her to join you.”

Philyra left on her new errand.

Heracles stared at her rear as she left. “That’s one good-looking Oceanid. I may share my body with her!”

“Hmmpf,” Dionysus grunted.

The port market bustled with activity. Workers filtered in for midday meals with a view. The gentle wind came off the water and cooled the

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gathering throng. But there were far fewer people at the port since the war with the Gigantes. The Olympians won an all-out victory but paid a price; there were few Titans left in the city and there was an exodus of most of the Oceanids. The loss of the former was the loss of most upper and mid-management talent. Loss of the latter was the loss of secretarial and temporary jobs plus loss of free childcare at the beaches. Many of the everyday workers had also left with the Titans and Oceanids. The land of Kypros, which included Port Olympus, Tartarus, Overlook Point, Phlegethon, and all the other communities on the almost-an-island, had suffered a significant loss of talented people.

Hestia was prepared to endure these losses until she could recover a viable workforce. Unfortunately, she would have to consult with that scum, Dionysus, to accomplish this.

Midday Meal

Dionysus need not look at the ruckus to know Hestia was arriving. *She can't even be seated at a table with civility. Surely, she let her assistant escort her down.*

He glanced at the commotion. *Hestia and two bodyguards but no Philyra.*

“Make a place for Hestia,” he commanded Heracles.

Dionysus rose and walked to where the Patio Captain was being loudly confronted by Hestia. The captain had said, “Chief-of-Chiefs, how nice of you to join us.”

Hestia glared at Dionysus.

He said to the Patio Captain, “Kepten, I will seat our special guest at my table. Find a table where her two escorts can keep watch on her safety. Assign your ablest server to our table. I will be indebted to you.”

“Yes, of course. Thank you, Master Dionysus.” The captain motioned his best server to attend to every need of Dionysus and his guest.

Hestia huffed beside Dionysus to the waiting table now being prepared for a third guest. The server pulled the chair out for her to be seated. She glared at him for having the audacity to look at her.

Dionysus spoke to the server. “Bring us a flask of the good dry red wine, bread, cheese, and shrimp with your red sauce to start. Then your fish

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with the fig sauce and nuts. If we finish that, check back with me. Be prompt and respectful. Bowing and scraping won't hurt, either."

The server said, "Yes, of course. Thank you, Master Dionysus."

Dionysus leaned back in his chair, lifted his cup of wine, and toasted, "Let us drink to the beauty, wisdom, and charm of Hestia."

"Hear, hear," said Heracles, quickly lifting his cup in salute.

"To what do I owe this attention, my dearest Hestia?" Dionysus asked.

"How can you possibly eat with these people under these conditions?" Hestia said in a voice loud enough to be heard across the patio.

Dionysus laughed. "With a voice like that, I can get you a job selling fish directly off the boats. They need loud obnoxious women to tout their wares. I, however, don't! Nor will I sit with a person without class. Do we have an understanding?" He smiled sweetly.

"Why don't I kill you, now?" she growled, in a softer voice.

"For the same reason I don't kill you now; blood on the table, spilled wine, nothing worthwhile accomplished. You just aren't worth the effort, Hestia. Now, I ask again. To what do I owe this attention? And where is your assistant? She seems nice—the only thing that makes being around you tolerable."

"I have problems, Dionysus. I didn't want her to hear our conversation." She stared pointedly at Heracles.

Dionysus said to Heracles, "Go entertain the two Gigantes, Heracles. Gossip with them. Glean any intelligence they might happen to have."

Heracles reluctantly rose. "Yes, *Master!*" he said as he left to join the two bodyguards.

Their food arrived. They talked as they ate.

Dionysus said, "All right, Hestia, keep it business and I will keep it business."

"I have lost half my workforce, the smart half at that. I don't know where workers come from. What port do I raid to capture hardworking subjects to obey the Olympians? What did Titans do to subjugate their workers?"

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He stared at Hestia in silent disbelief, then sadness, then anger. “Let’s concentrate on your problem. You need to hire more staff. How do you do that? Correct?”

“Yes. The Titans did all the hiring. But they had too many low-class people working for the port. Now I need to hire more people and a higher class.”

“You’re too hung up on this class thing, Hestia. Let it go. Your nemesis Titans created a great empire by surrounding themselves with rejects, castoffs, and cripples from other tribes. You have far better talent to draw from. You don’t think that you are better than our food server, do you? Never mind! Of course, you do. But know this, it is by accident of birth that I’m not sitting here with the server, and you are the one serving. Throw you both naked into a wilderness and I guarantee it will be the server that walks out. Now, back to the subject that you keep wandering from. You need to hire staff.”

“Yes, Dionysus. How do I find worthy new hires?”

“Oh, I don’t know. How about this?” Dionysus signaled his server.

The server hurried over. “Yes, Master Titan—I mean Olympian.”

Dionysus laughed. “You are most attentive and disciplined. What’s your name? Are you from around here?”

The server was in an awkward position but responded with false confidence. “I am Charon, Master. I’m from Tartarus. My mother was a farmer girl. She told me that my father was Master Outis or maybe even the great Enceladus. But I imagine he was some random metal worker.

“Interesting,” Dionysus replied. “What do you do in your off-hours?”

“I am a scribe at the great Library. I teach reading. I also read the scrolls of and about Chief Iapetus, from his boyhood days as Piercer up until his ... last entries.”

“Fantastic! And last question. What are your interests?”

“Oh, the metalworking projects they do in the north. I study the teachings of Iapetus in the library. I came to the port last season and tried to get work, but I was told I was not worthy.”

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“My goodness. An ambitious, studious scribe who is found to be unworthy. How interesting.” Dionysus took a small piece of blank parchment from his pocket and scribbled his sign on it. “In five days, take this to Philyra on the thirteenth floor. Tell her you request an internship in upper metalworking management. I make no promises, Master Charon, but I believe Philyra likes me. She will at least listen to you. Be confident, almost arrogant; not subservient.”

Charon accepted the paper with several quick bows. “Thank you, Master Olympian. I will do this. Thank you.” *Master Charon. He called me ‘Master’. He is an Olympian calling me Master Charon. Thirteenth floor. This paper is my way to greatness! Philyra. Five days. An actual job with the port administration!*

Dionysus cleared his throat and stared at Charon. “Any questions?”

Charon broke from his trance, said, “Oh, none. Thank you, Master,” and scurried away tightly holding the parchment.

Dionysus said to Hestia, “He has potential. Philyra can decide.”

“We’ll see, Dionysus. But I don’t think you know what you’re talking about.”

They finished their meal, rose, and proceeded to Hestia’s office.

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2. Team Meeting

Philyra met Hestia, Dionysus, and Heracles at the entrance to the fifteenth floor; the executive floor where the Olympian overlords worked. “Did you have a nice midday meal, Chief?”

“Exquisite,” she replied.

“Sweet, Bitter, or wine?” Philyra asked the three.

“Nothing. We have business to discuss,” Hestia replied as she marched toward her desk.

The three sat down around her desk.

Dionysus said, “Philyra will join us as an equal.”

“Join us as an equal?!” Hestia demanded.

“Equal in a business sense. As a matter of fact, in business, she is more equal than either of us. We are discussing business here, Hestia.”

Hestia said, “Very well. It’s a bad precedent but you may join us, Philyra. Dionysus needs your input.”

Philyra hesitated, said “Yes, Chief,” and pulled out a chair to sit in.

Dionysus said, “You need to put up a privacy wall, Hestia. Your siblings appear to be interested in what’s going on. But then you couldn’t watch *them*, could you? No matter. Philyra, what position is most important to fill the quickest?”

Philyra looked confused and looked to Hestia for guidance.

Hestia nodded permission to speak freely.

Philyra took a deep breath. “Oh, my goodness. We have been needing someone for Mining, Metals, and Manufacturing for a long time. I’m sure Hades does an outstanding job but no one from that department is ever here to plan and coordinate. Hades is always out in the field. Maybe if he had an administrative assistant, at least on the thirteenth floor, it would help streamline things a little bit. And a coordinator to receive and dispatch port traffic would be fantastic. Amphitrite did an amazing job, but she was retired with all the other Titans. I don’t know whose ships to expect or what they carry. That would be a tremendous help. And our

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internal messaging is almost nonexistent. Nobody knows what they should be doing or what anybody else has done.”

Heracles interjected, “We need those Titans back. They were great at that.”

Dionysus said sharply, “Quiet! Dung-head!”

To Philyra, he said, “A candidate for the 3M department will call on you in five days. I don’t know if he would fit but he has an interest. Do you know anyone who might be a good coordinator?”

Philyra glanced at Hestia. Hestia stared back cold-faced.

Philyra tentatively answered, “Well, yes. There is a young man who worked in Amphitrite’s office, Nerites. He’s smart and knowledgeable.”

Dionysus asked, “Poseidon manages Port Operations well?”

“He’s fantastic with the in-the-water part of it. Not so great with the paperwork and managing people part of it. He’s seldom here, which is probably for the best. Kind of like Hades. Demeter would be a good manager, but she’s just interested in grains and harvesting.”

“Who is in charge of hiring, Philyra?”

“In charge of hiring? We don’t have anyone like that. If a manager needed someone, they went out and found them.”

“I’ve heard enough, Chief Hestia. Can we have a private meeting tomorrow after midday meal? Up on the roof? The view is inspiring.”

Hestia considered the request. “Will you have anything worthwhile for me?”

“By after midday meal, yes. But I need time for it to come together.”

“All right. You and I on the roof tomorrow. Show them out Philyra.”

Philyra rose immediately and motioned Dionysus and Heracles to follow.

As they approached the door, Dionysus said, “Meet me at the cafe after you get off work. All right? I have a problem you can solve for me.”

“You want to couple with an Oceanid? Sorry, big boy! You aren’t my type.”

Dionysus laughed. “After work, Philyra! Be there!”

“Maybe. Maybe not.”

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3. Chiron

She arrived sooner than Dionysus had expected but still, he had the wine waiting. He poured a cup for her as soon as he saw her approach. It was waiting when she arrived at his table. “Sit, drink this. Let’s get you ready for the evening.”

“You are persistent, Dionysus, and the answer is still no,” she said as she sat down and accepted his wine.

He laughed. “I’m here to negotiate a trade with you, Oceanid. I see the future for your mistress and her Olympian ilk. Plus, for the port and all humanity. Should I sell out my self-respect and tell your chief how to save her butt? I will do it just for you. Although, it’s what Queen Kiya would want me to do. She’s the only reason I’m still in this place. “

“Yes, I would like that. I see a lot of things that need doing but for an Olympian to take suggestions from an Oceanid is unthinkable. You are one of them. She will listen to you. That’s why she went to you for help. Yes, I will couple with you if you save Port Olympus from going under.”

“Sorry, Oceanid Philyra, the price for my self-respect is not your pleasure, it is your pain.”

“Ohhh, a spanking beforehand. I can handle that!”

Dionysus remained serious. “I have a friend, Philyra. I have heard his story many times. The name ‘Philyra’ is always there. He is the most noble and worthy human there is. He simply looks different. He needs you.” He stared at her.

Her face went cold. “No, Dionysus. I will not see him.”

“If I am to sacrifice my humanity for you and your worthless Olympians. I require your humanity in return.”

“No. Please, no, Dionysus.”

“Have another cup of wine, sweet Philyra. Together, we can do this.”

After her third wine. He took her hand and led her to the port transportation center. He engaged a carriage and helped her into it. With his satchel over his shoulder, he climbed in and said, “900 Pace Path, please.”

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The carriage arrived at the great path circling the abandoned home of the now dead Elder Titans. It was well into the night when they arrived.

Few people still lived there—some farmer women, animal handlers for the livestock, some stone cutters, random people. Gone were the Elder Titans, now dead, and the younger Titans, scattered to the high hills of the mainland, and the Oceanids, to waters far from Port Olympus. Gone, too, were the Gigantes. None remained to live in this now accursed place.

“He lives this way, Philyra.” He led the reluctant Oceanid up a path bound by flowers gone to seed. They passed bathhouses and unpruned shrubs on their left. The only light was provided by a quarter moon under slow-moving clouds.

Finally, in the distance were the small fires and torches of the remaining inhabitants. “Halloo,” Dionysus called out into the night. A figure appeared. “Dionysus,” a female shrieked out, “you have come to see us.” Women came running from their homes to greet him.

He removed flasks of wine from his satchel, and said, “I bring you gifts better than I. Here, take these bottles, enjoy the fruit of the grape.”

They wanted him to join them and provide even more merriment. He declined. “I am here on business. We will have a party next time!”

They retired in sadness, but excitedly, with their four containers of wine.

Dionysus led Philyra past the houses, to the last one, away from the others. He stopped, turned to Philyra, and said, “Not only will you do this, but you will do it well.”

With that, he walked to the door and knocked. “It is I, Master Chiron, your friend Dionysus.”

After the sound of shuffling, the door opened. Chiron stood there with outstretched arms. “My friend, you take time to come see me. Come in.”

“I did not come alone, Chiron. I brought someone else.”

“To see me, Master? Do they know what I look like?”

“All too well, Chiron. But she sees only the outside. I have brought her to see the real you.”

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“Oh, Master, I will present myself as best I can.”

He motioned to Philyra. “Come here, my dear. You remember Chiron—your son.”

Philyra stepped forward to face her son. In the darkness looking head-on, he appeared to be a normal man. She took a deep breath. “Hello, Chiron. I haven’t seen you in a long time.”

“Mother. You honor me. That you will look upon me, brings my heart joy. You need not look more. This moment is more than I deserve.”

He fell to his knees and prostrated himself before her. The front half, that is. The rear half remained standing.

She choked back a sob.

Dionysus glared at her, daring her not to take his hands and lift him. She closed her eyes and lifted her son to his feet.

“We wish to visit, Master Chiron. I am here to show your mother the difference between humanity and inhumanity, between grotesque and merely physically different. I bring the mother to face the son. Be patient. This will be difficult for her.”

“I understand, Friend Dionysus. I will show her my disfigurement. I will suffer the revulsion she will feel. If this is your will, then I shall not try to hide the grotesque shape of my body. I shall trust you to salve the horror that I bring her. Come in, Mother. This is where I live.”

Chiron led them into his modest home. He gave them chairs and put another log on the small fire. Illuminated by the firelight, he removed his tunic and stood so she could see the outline of his body. “As you can see, my hindquarters have grown significantly since I became a man. My rear legs are fully functional. At least, enough that children could ride upon my back. I can gallop, after a sort. Although not as smoothly as a real horse. Friend Apollo taught me the art of the lyre, medicine, and prophesy. Friend Artemis trained me in archery and hunting. Before they left Tartarus, the children would come to the beach to see me. They came to see my grotesque deformity but would deem to ride upon my back, and sometimes let me teach those things that Leto’s twins had so graciously

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taught me. I live in quiet joy. My only regret is the extreme dishonor which my birth brought to my beloved mother and esteemed father.”

Philyra threw up.

Chiron hurried away to fetch water and linens to clean her vomit. Philyra remained in the chair sobbing uncontrollably.

While Chiron was away, Dionysus said to Philyra, “Strange, isn’t it? Cronus, the only son of Kiya and Pumi, fathered only little monsters. Six physically beautiful but completely inhumane babies by Rhea and one physically deformed but emotionally beautiful baby like Chiron by you. Nature has a delicious sense of humor, don’t you think?”

As Charon returned, Dionysus said. “Your mother has a few issues to work through, Chiron. Before you put your clothes back on, there is one last thing to be done.”

He walked to Philyra, pulled her up, and roughly removed her dress and undergarments. She stood there, eyes clenched closed, gulping sobs. “Now, Oceanid Philyra, Executive Assistant to Chief-of-Chiefs Olympian Hestia, do as the children of Tartarus have done before you. Ride on his back!”

She held back as Dionysus pulled her toward her son. He forced her, eyes clenched closed, to touch the deformed growth of her son’s extended back. She trembled, vomited again, fell to her knees, and cried out, “Cronus—Rhea—Kiya – forgive me.”

She was silent for a long, long time and then opened her eyes to stare at her deformed son. She whispered, “Chiron—my son—forgive me.”

She rose, swung her leg over his back, and said “Carry me to Oursea, Chiron. I have not touched Oursea since you were born. Let all people see Philyra with her son.”

OCEANIDS: Metis, Tyche, Clymene, Eurybia, Amphitrite, Philyra, Rhodos.

TELCHINES: Dexithea, Makelo, Halia.

EAST: Azura, Seth, Typhon, Iasion, Endymion.

OTHER: Centaur Chiron, Charon, Hotep, Petra, Persephone.

4. Birth of the Nephilim

Noon.

Hestia waited on the roof of the Port Olympus building.

Dionysus entered and walked over to greet her. “The view is inspiring. You are inspiring. The Olympians are inspiring. I know what you should do. I will tell you what you should do and after I tell you, I will leave. You need not do anything I tell you. I have told no one else what I shall tell you nor will I. This, dear Aunt Hestia, is what you should do.”

She stared at him without expression.

He began, “Olympians will no longer see themselves as part of anything. Olympians are above everything. I have a new made-up title for you. ‘Lord of Lords.’ ‘Nephil’ for short. You own everything in the world. You don’t have to demand anything because you already own it. You are just letting other people use it. You can do and take whatever you want. No one can even aspire to become one of you. And most important, the Nephilim won’t have to associate with the lower classes ever again. Think about that, never again! Do you like that part?”

“Yes, I like that part.”

“Well, you won’t like this part! You will make Oceanid Philyra the Port Olympus ‘Chief-of-Chiefs.’ You and your brethren are out of day-to-day operations. But you *will* like this part—you will be the sole chief of Philyra. You can command her what you want to be done, just not how to do it. Your brothers and sisters can tell you what they want, if they really care, and you can command Philyra what her goal is, but all other Nephilim will be isolated from Philyra and her staff.”

“Hmmm.”

“Don’t make an immediate decision. Consider everything. You can give out fancy titles like ‘Nephil of the Sea,’ and ‘Nephil of the Sky,’ and ‘Nephil of the Underground.’ But command Philyra to create a Port organization to maximize the reach and power of the port and then stay out of her way except for some petty commands to make you feel good about yourself. She will recruit and appoint based on competence; not on family relations; not on your preferences. When word gets out that

ELDER OLYMPIANS: Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, Zeus
OLYMPIANS: Apollo, Ares, Artemis, Athena, Aphrodite, Dionysus, Hermes,
Hephaestus, Heracles. LIVING TITANS: Oceanus, Tethys, Selene.
DECEASED TITANS: Kiva, Iapetus/Piercer, Cronus.

Olympians are no longer running—that is, interfering—with port operations, old managers will start drifting back in. You and your brethren can party all day on the sixteenth and seventeenth floors. Maybe make some vacation homes in the Graikoi Mountains.”

He paused. “That’s a lot to absorb. Are you with me so far?”

“Yes.”

“There are a few rules. The managers closest to you, the lords of the lower floors, those who actually do the work must all become rich and powerful. But it is not the Nephilim they will compete with. It’s everybody below them. And everybody below them must have the hope that one day, they, too, can become powerful like your Lords on the high floors. But no one can aspire to ever become a Nephil. The Nephilim may look down upon the lower classes like scum beneath their feet if you think of them at all. But you will *not* look down upon your Lords. They are your top-level managers; the ones who do all the work and are the buffer between the Nephilim and the lower classes. You must always, without exception, *always* respect your Lords, love them, and reward them well. They will do everything they can to maintain your favor. Whatever you do—sear this into your brain—don’t interfere with Philyra. Tell her what you want, then stay out of her way while she does it.”

She continued to stare at him, unblinking.

He finished, “I have shown you the way, Aunt Hestia. Now, I am evil like you. Do as you will. I’m going to get drunk. Goodbye.”

Dionysus turned and left.

Hestia stared after him. *No more dealing with the lower classes. Own everything. I may like this.*

OCEANIDS: Metis, Tyche, Clymene, Eurybia, Amphitrite, Philyra, Rhodos.

TELCHINES: Dexithea, Makelo, Halia.

EAST: Azura, Seth, Typhon, Iasion, Endymion.

OTHER: Centaur Chiron, Charon, Hotep, Petra, Persephone.

5. Hestia and Artemis

Artemis was thrilled. The great Hestia herself had Artemis by the hand pulling her to the rooftop away from the raging Olympian party. This was recognition of the highest honor. Even Aphrodite was allowed here only when Zeus required her attention. Artemis wanted to invite her twin brother, Apollo, but she didn't dare suggest it. Hestia seldom paid the lesser Olympians any attention.

They arrived on the roof and sat upon one of the sofas facing Oursea. The view of the port was magnificent. Hestia was uncharacteristically attentive. "My dear Artemis, now that I have made Philyra the port Chief-of-Chiefs, I have time to pay more attention to my dearest Olympian relatives. I have been wanting to show you this view for a long time."

Hestia remained silent as Artemis blathered on about whatever it was she was blathering on about. Hestia finally interrupted Artemis with a drawn-out sigh and the cloying words, "I have not had an opportunity to express my deep sorrow over the unfortunate deaths of your beloved Grandmother Phoebe and our Great-grandmother Kiya. I almost feel responsible. My Hecatoncheire were fighting those dreadful Gigantes, and the Titans were inadvertently caught in the crossfire. It was horrible. I tried to save them, but I couldn't get to them in time. I am so distraught over the incident. But how are you doing, dear? Are you holding up well? You always look so young and beautiful."

Artemis was now even more thrilled. She had known that if she ever brought up the killing of the Elder Titans she and her brother would no longer be welcomed as Olympians. She had kept her mouth shut on the subject but now she knew the truth. *Aunt Hestia tried to save them but couldn't. I feel so much better about the entire incident. I will tell Apollo as soon as we're alone.*

She said, "Oh, don't grieve, Aunt Hestia. You did all you could. I am proud of you for trying!"

Hestia smiled a sad little smile. "You are so kind and loving Artemis. I'm glad that you and your brother are Olympians in good standing. Now, tell me, how do you maintain your young girlish features? You don't seem to age at all!"

ELDER OLYMPIANS: Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, Zeus
OLYMPIANS: Apollo, Ares, Artemis, Athena, Aphrodite, Dionysus, Hermes,
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“Did not Aunt Rhea share the secret of the Red Nectar when she had your Ceremony of Womanhood?”

Hestia thought, *Ceremony? What ceremony? Careful, Hestia.*

She said, “Oh, no, sweet Artemis. Mother never provided this ceremony, and I was a Titanide after all. Did I miss something?”

“Every Titanide should have received her Ceremony of Womanhood. It was then we learned the secret of Queen Kiya’s Red Nectar which keeps us all so young. We are sworn to share the secret with only our worthy daughters at their Ceremony. Not even the Titanes know of it. We slip it to our males without their knowledge. I can’t believe Aunt Rhea didn’t instruct you.”

Hestia lowered her head and let out a sob. “No. Mother never liked me. I never knew why. I tried so hard to make her like me. I think she was mad at Father for divorcing her and sending us all to that forsaken island where we grew up.”

She took Artemis’s hand in hers and looked deeply into her eyes. “But at least you know the recipe, sweet Olympian Artemis. Sister Demeter and I will simply have to grow too old too soon.”

Artemis stared back with concern; unsure of how to respond.

Then Hestia’s eyes brightened. She said, “But I wonder, is it possible, under the next full moon, would it be possible for you and me and Demeter, just the three of us, to gather here on the roof and for you, as a Titanide, to give the Ceremony of Womanhood to me and my sister? We are both technically Titanides through Mother Rhea. Is that possible, sweet Olympian Artemis?”

Hestia’s eyes danced with excitement.

Artemis quietly replied, “I am sworn to give the ceremony only to my worthy daughters.”

Hestia said, “I understand.” *Don’t rush this. Patience. Right, Grandmother Kiya?* She continued, “You think my sister and I are not worthy. But at least consider it. The ceremony would bring the three of us so close together

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and help salve the horrible loss of our mothers. YOU could be our new mother!”

Artemis panicked. “I will consider it, Hestia, but I have no one to turn to for advice.”

Hestia smiled sweetly. “Come and see me, anytime, Artemis. My door is always open to a sister Olympian—in good standing.”

6. Demeter and Persephone

They sat in a field of flowers.

Demeter loved the Elysian Fields. Especially when it was full of flowers. Especially when she sat beside her sweet daughter, Persephone. Persephone would pretend to paint colors onto the flowers—the yellows, the purples, the oranges, the reds. *Sometimes, my child looks back over the fields and believes that it was she who painted the flowers. She is a sweet, simple child. So innocent. But almost a woman. Soon, she will be fodder for rampaging Olympian males who respect no woman. Respecting no relation they have with the woman. They are animals. Miserable male animals.*

She could still feel the repulsive body of her brother Zeus smothering her body, barely allowing her to breathe as he pounded away at her. *The sickness of it. My own brother. Impregnating me. I will protect my daughter from Zeus at all costs. My other brothers will at least ask and respect her refusal. But Zeus won't. He did not respect me. He will not respect our daughter. He made me bear a child. A sweet child. A sweet, simple, innocent child. My sweet Persephone.*

Dionysus would sometimes mock her. “You are more Titan than Olympian, Demeter. Runaway with me. Let’s escape these monsters.”

She would laugh because Olympians were supposed to laugh at everything and have fun and not care about anything other than being an Olympian. Dionysus was an Olympian, but he was the exception, he was more Titan than Olympian. She, however, was more Olympian than Titan. She cared far more about things like power and obedience and fame than about other people. But it was true. She alone of her siblings loved the land, the fields and the flowers, the grains and the harvests.

Hades, too, loved the land. But not the surface. He loved his quarries and his caves. Hades was strange; quiet, serious, and a little scary.

But today, Demeter lay on her back in a field of grass looking up at the clouds, her sweet daughter lying beside her, in a bed of flowers painted by Persephone.

On the verge of womanhood.

OCEANIDS: Metis, Tyche, Clymene, Eurybia, Amphitrite, Philyra, Rhodos.

TELCHINES: Dexihea, Makelo, Halia.

EAST: Azura, Seth, Typhon, Iasion, Endymion.

OTHER: Centaur Chiron, Charon, Hotep, Petra, Persephone.

7. Hades and Chiron

Hades stopped to stare at abandoned Tartarus. *The reports must be true. The Titans have been killed. Did Hestia hate them that much? Master Iapetus—dead?! He was the only person to teach me. To mentor me. I knew nothing of metals—of mines—of the vast worlds beneath the earth. He taught me everything. Slaughtered by my own sister’s army. A lot has happened since I was last at the port. But three months in my mines doesn’t feel like a long time.*

He walked slowly past the abandoned entrance guest house onto the great patio. He stood looking at the fire pit.

He walked on. He came to the house at the end of the path. *Queen Kiya’s?*

He turned right, walked the path in front of the homes of the Elder Titans, and stopped in front of the last home marked with the sign of Iapetus and Clymene. *This is where Master Iapetus lived!*

He walked to the door and pushed. It opened. Inside were the glories of the greatest metal and stone scholar to ever live, Scholar Master Elder Titane Chief-Research-Chief-for-Metals Iapetus, “Piercer the Great.”

Hades sank into a chair. He had never cried before but now felt like it. After a while, he composed himself. Being in Piercer’s quarters helped focus his mind. *If the rumors are true, Hestia has made me some kind of supreme chief of the underground. All the mines and caves. I can do anything I want and command anyone I want. What’s that about? What shall I do?*

Hades had no great love for his fellow Olympians. *They look down on me like they are better than me. Aphrodite doesn’t even moan when I couple with her. She thinks she is too good for me. They are all mean and don’t even like the dark. I hate them all. Iapetus talked to me like an equal—even though I am a superior Olympian, and he was only an Elder Titan. He taught me everything about metals and rocks and fires and mining, but Hestia killed him before he had taught me enough. There are wonderful metals I could mine and find out about. Which ones to combine. Find out what they would do. We were learning how to make fires bigger and hotter. That was the key. Hotter fires. But now I am alone.*

He found Piercer’s bed and lay upon it. *Iapetus. Dead. I am the supreme master of the underground. But I am all alone.*

ELDER OLYMPIANS: Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, Zeus
OLYMPIANS: Apollo, Ares, Artemis, Athena, Aphrodite, Dionysus, Hermes,
Hephaestus, Heracles. LIVING TITANS: Oceanus, Tethys, Selene.
DECEASED TITANS: Kiya, Iapetus/Piercer, Cronus.

Sunrise

Hades left the house to the bright sunrise of a beautiful morning. It wasn't that Hades hated beautiful mornings, it was that he loved his cool, dim, subterranean offices more. He continued his walk upon the path that would eventually turn into the road to Port Olympus. He came to 300 Pace Path but continued on. He came to 900 Pace Path and impulsively turned right onto it. There were fields of flowers attended by bees on either side. He came upon small houses. *For the workers?*

Farmer women were beginning to leave for their daily work in the fields. *They no longer have masters, but still, they work. How interesting.*

A man stepped out from one of the houses—and kept stepping out. Hades stared in disbelief. *That is not a normal man. What is that?*

Hades shouted at the creature, “What are you? Some kind of monster?!”

Chiron smiled at Hades. “Yes, a grotesque monster. I shamed my beloved mother by my birth. Better I had been born dead than live like this. But I am here. Shall I disrobe so that you can stare at my deformity?”

Hades stared, then said, “Yes.”

Chiron removed the tunic which he wore on his human portion. “I would offer to let you ride on my back as the small children once enjoyed, but you appear to be heavy. I'm sorry I cannot make you this offer.”

“Can I touch it?”

“Oh, yes. Please do. It sometimes helps one overcome their repulsion.”

Hades walked over and put his hands on Chiron's extended back. *He is more grotesque than I. How wonderful*

“You look like some kind of horse.”

“Yes. But not a handsome horse. A misshapen, ugly horse. I am the worst of both man and horse. A hideous abomination.”

“You take it well.”

“What are my choices, Master ...” He waited for his visitor's name.

Hades looked puzzled. No one had ever not known who he was before. Then he realized this creature did not recognize him. With exaggerated

OCEANIDS: Metis, Tyche, Clymene, Eurybia, Amphitrite, Philyra, Rhodos.

TELCHINES: Dexithea, Makelo, Halia.

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OTHER: Centaur Chiron, Charon, Hotep, Petra, Persephone.

self-importance, Hades said, “I am Olympian Hades, Chief of all Port Olympus Mining Operations. At least, I used to be.”

Chiron bowed his front and rising said, “I am so sorry I did not recognize you, Olympian Hades. I have not seen a real Olympian before. Iapetus often told me of your superior knowledge of his mines and your love for it. Please forgive my shortcomings.”

With supreme superiority, Hades replied, “I will overlook your ignorance this time. Pay attention in the future!”

Chiron bowed again. “You are gracious and merciful. Thank you for speaking to one such as me.” He backed away, head bowed, expecting dismissal.

“Hmmp! You are respectful enough. You may accompany me on my walk. Advise me on the things I see.”

“Yes, Master. It will be my fortunate honor to do so.”

They continued Hades’ stroll up the circular path. Chiron provided a running commentary on the landscape and the things they saw. They came to a fence. Chiron said, “This fence circles the pastures of the Great Outis. It contains our aurochs and horses plus the many beehives which produce our honey. Over there is a pasture for our Mouflons. Outis tamed them. He called them sheep. Their hair is incredibly soft. Those smaller enclosed places are for our egg-laying birds and our hares. All our animals are raised here. Come, I will show you the small animal section.”

They entered a gate into the pasture. “Outis was my friend and was deformed, like me. He had only one eye and it was hard for some people to look into his face. But the Elder Titans took him into their family as one of their own. The great Elder Titanide, Rhea, told me once, in a moment of wine-induced confidence, that her first coupling was with Outis. ‘It is the most different who are the most interesting,’ she told me. She tilted her head and smiled as she said this. In my fantasies, I pretended she was inviting me to ask her to couple. I, of course, didn’t ask. Any possibility, no matter how small, that I might sire a child must be avoided. But I will confess, many of the older farmer women tell me that they are too old to bear children. I couple with them as best I can. A poor substitute for a real man, I’m sure. Still, they come to me often.”

They saw men and women working in the distance.

ELDER OLYMPIANS: Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, Zeus
OLYMPIANS: Apollo, Ares, Artemis, Athena, Aphrodite, Dionysus, Hermes,
Hephaestus, Heracles. LIVING TITANS: Oceanus, Tethys, Selene.
DECEASED TITANS: Kiva, Iapetus/Piercer, Cronus.

Chiron said, “Those are the children and friends of the Great Outis. They continue his work with animals. Come, I will show you everything.”

They continued to the area where work was going on. Chiron was greeted by the workers, who glanced at Hades without recognizing that he was an Olympian, but still knew not to speak; this was no friendly Titan master. Chiron continued his monolog.

They came to pens containing dogs. All barked in greeting except one; sitting in the back, a large dog with greatly oversized ears sat staring, unblinking, at Hades.

“What are those things?” Hades asked.

“These are the working dogs. They herd animals and protect them from predators. They provide companionship to those who seek a companion. I have considered taking one, but they don’t know that I am different. I feel like that would be a betrayal of trust, so I don’t accept one.”

Hades returned the unblinking stare of the large dog with its oversized ears. Chiron noticed and said, “That one in the back seems to recognize you as its master. Do you wish to take him as your own?”

Hades asked, “What’s it good for? How does one take a dog? What’s involved?” Hades continued to return the stare of the dog as he listened to Chiron’s long-winded explanation of everything involved in adopting a dog. *The thing likes me. I can tell. It thinks I am different from other people—better. It certainly likes me more than my Olympian kin like me. Will it obey me? Can it bring me things? Discipline the insolent? Keep the lower classes away from me? Does it like darkness? What are you good for, dog? What is your name?*

Finally, Hades interrupted Chiron’s explanation. “Will it come to me if I command it to? How do I call it?”

Chiron replied, “His name is Cerberus. Call his name and let’s find out.”

Hades, in his best Olympian voice, commanded, “Cerberus! Come!”

The dog rose, trotted to the gate, and stood waiting for it to open.

Chiron opened the gate. Cerberus trotted through, walked to Hades, and sat down; staring, ears up, waiting for his master’s command.

OCEANIDS: Metis, Tyche, Clymene, Eurybia, Amphitrite, Philyra, Rhodos.

TELCHINES: Dexihea, Makelo, Halia.

EAST: Azura, Seth, Typhon, Iasion, Endymion.

OTHER: Centaur Chiron, Charon, Hotep, Petra, Persephone.

8. Hades, Hestia, and Charon

Hestia glared at Hades as she demanded, “Where in all the lands of Hades have you been for over three months? I needed you here!”

She then noticed the animal crouching at his feet. She involuntarily gasped and stepped back.

Hades said, “I was busy doing useful things, Hestia. And this is Cerberus. He is a dog. I don’t think he likes you because of the way his hair is standing on end. By the way, on the walk from Tartarus, I passed a random woman working in the fields. I pointed to her and said, ‘Cerberus! Kill!’ He is quite an efficient killer. Would you like to touch him?”

She took another step back and said, “Keep that thing away from me!”

Hades dropped his hand and commanded, “Cerberus! Down!” The dog obediently lay down on the floor at his master’s feet alert for any subsequent command. “Now, Hestia shall we continue standing as you tell me why you want me here, or can we sit?”

“Come sit on the sofa. Leave that thing where it is.”

“Cerberus! Stay!” He walked to the sofa overlooking the magnificent port. “Where is everybody?”

“Everything’s changed. Olympians no longer must deal with the lower classes. We are a class above all classes. We are greater than Olympians. We are called Nephilim. It’s all good. We like it. I am the only Olympian who must talk to a lower-class person—Philyra. And she is the only one of her class to whom I must ever speak. We have rules that we Olympians need to observe so that we can keep this arrangement working. Know everyone on the thirteenth floor, always treat them with respect, refer to them as Lords, and never talk down to any one of them. It would ruin everything. They are the buffer between us and the despicable masses. Train yourself to think of them as a high class. We Nephilim no longer need to think of ourselves as the higher class. Nephilim are above all classes. Just remember to treat the Lords like they are worthy humans. They will obey us out of neediness, not out of fear. Dionysus taught me this. Are we in agreement?”

ELDER OLYMPIANS: Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, Zeus
OLYMPIANS: Apollo, Ares, Artemis, Athena, Aphrodite, Dionysus, Hermes,
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“That’s a lot to consider, Hestia. And what about this ‘master of the underground?’”

“Oh, I divided the world into four parts. Poseidon owns everything related to water. Zeus owns everything related to the sky. You own everything below ground. We all share the ground and things on it. I hope you are pleased. By the way, you are no longer ‘Port-Olympus-Chief-Research-Scholar-for-Metal-Research.’ Philyra replaced that with a Chief-of-Metals, Mining, and Manufacturing position; CoM3 she calls it. Your replacement’s name is Charon or something. Only Philyra can command him, not me or you. If you want him to do something, tell me and I’ll tell Philyra.”

“Hmm. I own the underworld, but I must go through you to get anything done. How does that work?”

“You run around doing whatever you want to do. You just don’t get to tell other people what to do. The details are being worked out. Now, your relatives are upstairs having a party. You have been away a long time. Do you want to go have fun with Aphrodite or something? I hear there may be a goat sacrifice. Maybe that animal of yours would like to join in.”

“That sounds interesting, Hestia. But first, introduce me to this Charon commoner who replaced me. Is he like Titan Piercer?”

“I will ask Philyra to introduce you. He will be like anyone you wish him to be like. Being friendly is not your strong point but you must be friendly to this Charon whoever! And remember, he is a Lord; high class, not a commoner.” She paused to let him consider her commands. “All right, Hades, let’s go down and meet this Lord Charon person.”

Hestia escorted Hades, with Cerberus by his side, to the thirteenth floor. “Chief Philyra,” Hestia gushed, “How nice of you to see us on such short notice. Oh, and don’t mind the delightful dog. He is quite friendly. You remember Nephil Hades, I trust. He is in after three hard months in the field and is just now catching up on your new organization. I hope Lord Charon can receive him, now.”

“Yes, Nephil Hestia. I have a conference room reserved where they can meet. Let me introduce Nephil Hades to Chief Charon and I will return to get an update on your new commands.”

OCEANIDS: Metis, Tyche, Clymene, Eurybia, Amphitrite, Philyra, Rhodos.

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