

Lesser Gods Chapter 7

By

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SCENE 1

RHEA (NAR.)

I have to admit, despite all the time I'd spent thinking about The Void, I never actually pictured meeting them. I especially didn't picture them cutting me out of a car I'd stolen... The blindfolding was a nice touch. That I probably could have predict-

SOUND: THUD.

RHEA (NAR.)

They drop me into a metal chair, not particularly careful of my arm. I hear a second thud as I assume Clark is dropped next to me.

CLARK

Ow.

RHEA (NAR.)

It's Clark alright. My blindfold is abruptly pulled off and I blink in the semi-darkness before me. A bulb that isn't doing much anyway flickers in an out over head. The wood planked floors and walls suggest some sort of cabin. I look to the window to see what floor we're on but it's as near to complete darkness outside as anything I've ever seen. My hands are tied together in my lap. Next to me, Clark looks frantically around despite still being blindfolded. His hands are bound behind him.

RHEA

It's okay, Clark. You're sitting down. Breathe.

REBEKAH

Clark? Strange name, huh?

RHEA (NAR.)

I spin to find the source of the woman's voice and see the clown from Iris' memorial a few feet behind me. Her arms are crossed and she leans near an iron stove in the corner.

REBEKAH

Hi Rhea. Oh right, rude of me.

RHEA (NAR.)

She pulls the mask off and reveals a gaunt, pale face.

Skin pulled tight over high cheekbones. Eyes, black. She's got to be in her fifties. Maybe a gen or so younger than Black. She's willowy, swaying as she approaches me, holding a small black bag.

CLARK

What's going on?

RHEA (NAR.)

I'll let you know when I do, I think. If this week has taught me anything, it's better to let them talk. She looms over me, looks for a long time at my face. Almost smiles. She reaches down with long fingers, unties my wrists. She pulls over another small metal chair and we sit eye to eye. She grabs my arm, marred by several deep gashes and bruises.

REBEKAH

Of all the people looking for you... You really know how to get yourself into a mess.

RHEA (NAR.)

She pulls a small spray bottle from the bag. Mists my arm with something that stings. She looks at my face for a response. I bite my tongue to keep from wincing. She takes a white cloth from the bag, rips it into a long strip with her teeth, then begins to tenderly wrap my arm.

CLARK

Rhea?

REBEKAH

He's kind of a panicer.

RHEA

I wonder why.

RHEA (NAR.)

Shit. I meant to keep being silent for at least another 15 minutes. The woman smiles.

REBEKAH

There it is. Wouldn't be getting the full experience if you spent the entire time sulking.

RHEA
Who are you?

REBEKAH
I think you know.

RHEA
Yeah, collectively.

REBEKAH
My name's Rebekah.

RHEA (NAR.)
Biblical batch. She's 55. There were a couple hundred of them. She watches me like she expects some kind of recognition. It's possible we've met before, but I can't place her.

REBEKAH
You're much older than the last time I saw you.

CLARK
You guys know each other?

RHEA (NAR.)
I ignore him because, well what does he expect?

RHEA
When was that?

REBEKAH
What brings you all the way out here?

RHEA (NAR.)
She leans back in her chair now.

RHEA
I needed to leave.

REBEKAH
And where were you going?

RHEA (NAR.)

If I say a safehouse I know she'll call me out. I don't really care what Clark thinks of me anymore, but I can't have him loosing his shit. So, I say nothing.
There's a tense beat of silence.

REBEKAH

Rhea, you can trust me. I'm not one of them. Clearly. I'm probably one of the last people who would even believe you.

RHEA

Someone killed Iris. They want it to be me.

REBEKAH

Why?

RHEA (NAR.)

There's a gleam in her eye that wasn't there a second ago.

RHEA

I think they would be relieved if I was out of the way. If we all were.

RHEA (NAR.)

She smiles with tight lips, turns to Clark.

REBEKAH

What about you, sir?

RHEA (NAR.)

Clark is so quiet and still now, I think he's asleep. No, hope he's asleep. Something about Rebekah's face tells me we don't need some Black defense right now... For once, Clark says nothing. Rebekah stands and crosses to him, with a flick of her boney wrist, she unties his blindfold. He winces against the semi brightness of the dim room.

REBEKAH

Better?

RHEA (NAR.)

He nods, reluctantly.

CLARK
Who are you?

RHEA (NAR.)
Instead of responding herself, Rebekah looks to me.

RHEA
They're The Void.

CLARK
Can you finish untying me?

REBEKAH
I'm not sure if I can trust you yet.

CLARK
You trust her.

REBEKAH
We're old friends. Although I do have to thank you Clark, for triggering our location system. Rhea, would you like to come to dinner?

RHEA (NAR.)
Fuck. Part of me wants to go, just to see. Impress them with a few Beckett quotes, ask what it is they do in their secret meetings. But... this kills me. It really does. Clark. Fucking Clark. I can't leave him like this. If only I felt just a little less bad for him.

RHEA
I'm not hungry, thanks.

RHEA (NAR.)
There's that small, smug smile again.

REBEKAH
Suit yourself.

RHEA (NAR.)
And she glides back towards the door. She pulls it open to the silence outside.

REBEKAH
Oh, and I am sorry. About Iris.

RHEA (NAR.)

And then she's gone. There's a heavy CLICK as she locks the door from the outside. I exhale and get to my feet. I untie Clark.

CLARK

What if she comes back?

RHEA

Then they'll tie us back up.

RHEA (NAR.)

He rubs his wrists thoughtfully.

CLARK

I'm sorry.

RHEA (NAR.)

He doesn't have to be, but I don't give him the satisfaction of saying that. Instead I strip off my shirt. I don't need to turn to look at him to see his face.

RHEA

Relax. I'm keeping my bra on.

RHEA (NAR.)

I ball it into a pillow and lie on the ground.

CLARK

You're going to be bed? We need to make a plan. How are we getting out of here? How far are we even from the-

RHEA (NAR.)

My blood boils with a new rage that comes from continuously having to lie to him. I might have had no plan, but I definitely didn't want him with me.

RHEA

There's nothing we can do tonight. We don't even know where we are. We don't even know how bad these people are.

CLARK

Then why don't you go catch up to her.

RHEA (NAR.)

I pause, flip onto my other side, facing him now.

RHEA
I'm exhausted from driving all day.

CLARK
Well I don't think you'll be driving again anytime soon.

RHEA
-And listening to you. And arguing with you. And almost dying. And meeting fucking Mortitia Adams. So yeah, I'm sleeping.

RHEA (NAR.)
I try and find a comfortable position on the hard floor. Clark stands and hesitates before crossing to the corner of the room. He faces the wall and he too takes off his shirt. He looks back at me, shrugs as he balls the shirt up.

CLARK
It was a good idea.

RHEA (NAR.)
And he lies down there in the corner.

RHEA
I'm not going to kill you. Or take off any more clothes off.

CLARK
I uhm... I like sleeping in smaller spaces.

RHEA (NAR.)
He runs a hand through his hair, crosses his arms over his bare chest.

CLARK
My room is- was very small. Cozy. Sometimes I just get kind of nervous if I can't touch the walls. My dad said it might happen after I moved. The anxiousness. As if something worse could happen.

RHEA (NAR.)
He turns away from me. I stare at him. He looks so vulnerable. Like a little kid. Like a little kid I know is going to make my life miserable. I think about Hera not sleeping somewhere. I hope Apollo is taking care of her. I hate myself for thinking that. I hate myself for putting her in the position to be taken care of. I look back at Clark.

Somewhere someone is probably hoping I'm taking care of him.
Ugh.

I get up and walk silently across the room. I lie down next to him, with my back pressed against his. He starts when he feels my skin on his.

RHEA

Pretend I'm a wall.

RHEA (NAR.)

I can't make Hera feel better tonight, but maybe helping this weirdo will at least let me sleep.

RHEA

When you said "dad" what did you mean?

RHEA (NAR.)

He waits so long to respond I think he's fallen asleep.

CLARK

There was this doctor at my facility, Falstaff, who I was very close with. Most people didn't want to talk to me outside of what was necessary. I felt like a pet, like a chore- or a job. Which I guess I was. But he treated me like a kid. Whenever he could. We were kind of in our own bubble, and I don't even remember when it started but I just started calling him "dad" which I think he liked. He loved the idea of families. His mentor had been named Clark. So my... dad started calling me "Clark" as kind of an inside joke. Like how kids used to be named after people their parents cared about. Not... themes.

RHEA

I know.

RHEA (NAR.)

And I'm surprised by the defensiveness in my own voice.

CLARK

But yeah, that was the idea.

RHEA

What's your real name?

CLARK

I'm not telling you.

RHEA
Is it Uranus?

RHEA (NAR.)
And I feel his back muscles contract as he laughs.

CLARK
Good night.

RHEA
It's totally Uranus.

CLARK
It's not.

SCENE 2

HERA (NAR.)
Have you ever had one of those nights when you lie very still and very quietly and very awake for a few hours, and try and tell yourself that counts as sleep? Have you ever had three of those in a row? I've had trouble sleeping for years now. But since Iris died it's been worse. So much worse. It's not made any better by the fact that we're currently sleeping in shifts, so one of the chaperones is always with the security team guarding Pers and Char. I think they're one step away from locking them up next to Eros. For safety. I don't think I could stand to be down there again. After Dion died, I worried it would halt things with him. That Eros' long shot at justice would be stalled, almost forgotten in the scramble. But I was wrong, things have gotten so much worse. The word is they've been grilling him for the past 12 hours. Assuming he knows something.
I stand, stretch, and remake the blankets on the cot. Not that I even moved them much. I reholster my gun at my hip. They've had to lend me one since Rhea still has mine. God, I hope she hasn't had to use it. Would she even know how? I think they've had one lesson their whole lives.

APOLLO
Hey.

HERA (NAR.)
Apollo is leaning against a door frame at the end of the dark hallway.

HERA
Were you watching me sleep?

APOLLO

I was watching you pretend too.

HERA (NAR.)

Our fight from a few days ago suddenly seems so unimportant,
but just to cover my bases-

HERA

I'm sorry about the other day. It was-

HERA (NAR.)

He holds up his hand.

APOLLO

Not even worth apologizing for. I'm sorry I fell on you.
How's your wrist?

HERA

It's fine...

HERA (NAR.)

Wrapped too tightly, vaguely itchy... But not worth
complaining about, considering...

HERA

How are they?

APOLLO

Char has been knocked out for hours with some help.

HERA (NAR.)

He extracts a whiskey bottle from a pocket.

APOLLO

Pers is quiet, but awake. Just staring off into space.
She doesn't want anything. Doesn't want to talk.

HERA

I can't believe he's gone.

APOLLO

I know. Of all people.

HERA (NAR.)

He runs a hand over his face. He looks exhausted. He stares at me, and actually suppresses a smirk. He presses his lips tightly together.

HERA

What could you possibly be smiling about?

APOLLO

Do you remember when we were kids and he got nailed in the face-

HERA

You nailed him in the face.

APOLLO

I was just kicking it to him. It was an accident!

HERA

Didn't stop him from freaking out.

APOLLO

And he got so mad he climbed to the top the swing set?

HERA

Why was he so good at climbing?

APOLLO

And when he was up there he hurled his shoes at me?
Called me-

HERA

A squirrel faced mother fucker.

APOLLO

Legally they said they weren't allowed to get him down themselves. They had to call the fire department!

HERA

And we weren't even allowed to talk about it afterwards.

HERA (NAR.)

I find myself smiling too.

The idea of the pudgy, little Dion clinging to a fire fighter as they climbed down the ladder... I wish there was going to be some kind of funeral where we could all sit around and tell stories like that but... I know it won't happen. We're all in lockdown. No fanfare, no goodbye.

HERA

I'm going to go talk to Persephone.

HERA (NAR.)

As I move to walk by him, he grabs my hand.

APOLLO

You've got another two hours before you're on. Artemis just started. Please try and sleep.

HERA

Like I haven't tried that.

APOLLO

Try again.

HERA (NAR.)

And he gently tows me back towards the cot. He takes his gun from an ankle holster. He reaches to my hip and places his hand on my weapon, but instead of removing it right away, his fingers glide a few inches onto the skin beneath my shirt. As he gently glides me towards him, his fingers brush the scar on my stomach. I jump.

The sudden intimacy startles me. He quickly removes his hand.

APOLLO

I'm sorry. Sorry.

HERA (NAR.)

He whispers. He takes my hand now, slowly, I let him. He climbs onto the cot, pulls me down beside him. My face just a few inches from his, he kisses my forehead, then closes his eyes.

HERA

You squirrel faced mother fucker.

HERA (NAR.)

Eyes still shut, he smiles, the faint light pools in his dimples. I watch him carefully, drooping my lids anytime I feel him stir. But he doesn't for sometime.

His face relaxes. I study him. Bring my finger tips within centimeters of lines where there used to be smooth young skin. We're in our 30s now. I wonder how old we'll get. If we'll be old together. I think about what's happened the last few days... Something has changed, but I think it's only my ability to admit something I've known for awhile. On some level... I've known it's always been Apollo. Even at the time I hated him most, I never imagined him not being around. And after the past few days... the idea of him not being around doesn't seem that far-fetched.

I know you must be thinking that I love him just because it's convenient, I thought that too but... it's just the opposite. His temper and his attention-seeking, his selfishness, make loving him so, so, so inconvenient. But I do. I'm not going to forgive him because he deserves it, but because I deserve it. Deserve *this*.

Rhea will take awhile to come around, but- Rhea...

And the warm breath of sleep on my neck turns cold again. Gently, I lift Apollo's arm off of me. I roll off the cot, and creep down the hallway towards the Yolk which has become a makeshift dorm. There's a guard outside, he nods in my direction.... I hold my ID bracelet up to the Yolk's reader and the door slides open. It's dark except for the glow from the screen. The news is on, but the sound is off. The table that's usually in the center of the room has been removed, replaced with more cots. Char is curled up, fast asleep. His legs hanging off the small frame. Pers lies staring comatose at the images on screen. Seeing, but not. I cross to her, and sit on the ground close to her feet.

PERS

Did you tuck Apollo in?

HERA (NAR.)

I pause, slightly caught off guard.

HERA

I did.

PER

Well at least someone is getting something out of this.

HERA (NAR.)

It's kind of comforting to hear her at least sound like herself. Her face is sallow, almost green in the light from the screen. Her usual, thick make up has streaked down her face. She looks like that Dali painting- Rhea would know it.

HERA

I'm sorry, Pers. I knew him for a long time...

I know you and Dion were close. He cared about you a lot. Way more than anyone else.

PERS

Do you have any real news about what happened?

HERA (NAR.)

I stand, pour a glass from the pitcher of water in the room. I stretch my long sleeve over my hand, dip it into the cool liquid and kneel in front of her.

HERA

I can't tell you anything.

HERA (NAR.)

She turns and for the first time I get a good look at her eyes. They're simmering.

HERA

They traced the bullet, found the gun in a residence building. Too far away for it not to be a pro. They don't know if it was intended for him or...

HERA (NAR.)

I trail off. I don't know if that would make her feel any better. She's quiet, watching like she didn't hear me. Slowly, I begin to wipe away the dark streaks from her cheeks. She watches me.

PERS

Everyone knows you're not sleeping again. Everyone thinks you're about to freak out and they'll have to put you in a fucking straight-jacket. You look terrible.

HERA

You're one to talk.

PERS

My friend died.

HERA

My sister is missing.

PERS

Not the same thing.

HERA
She could be... hurt. Or worse.

PERS
She's not dead. She would never just let herself die way out there. Not make it a big scene. Can't blame her. Used to think the same thing... Kinda got enough yesterday though.

HERA
I'm sorry you-

PERS
Have you ever been jealous of her?

HERA (NAR.)
The question gets brought around to me so quickly I'm unsure of how to answer. But she doesn't respond. Just keeps staring at me.

HERA
No. I haven't.

HERA (NAR.)
She smirks. I continue my work on her face.

PERS
Liar.

HERA
I haven't.

PERS
Well I was. When I was a kid, anyway. I wished I'd had a you. Never seemed like Rhea needed you, seemed unfair. As badly as she fucked up everyone just let her off with a warning. You can only be so disappointed in someone. She still always had you though. Because you cared.

HERA
You had chaperones-

PERS
Come on, not good ones.

HERA

I bite my tongue but my face must give me away.

PERS

You think that's my fault?

HERA

No, you were manipulated. You were just 14 when... But there have been... situations you've gotten yourself into.

PERS

You're fucking right I have. You don't think I just had to pick up certain skills because Black was watching Iris and you were watching Rhea and no one who was watching me wanted... well they weren't trying to protect me... I guess Dion was the exception there at the end.

HERA (NAR.)

And I'm not biting my tongue anymore, she's... I mean she's right.

HERA

I'm sorry. I'm wrong.

HERA (NAR.)

She watches me, then smiles.

PERS

I'll try and accept that. If only I was so generous with my forgiveness as you.

HERA

That isn't true.

PERS

Really? When was the last time you were mad at Rhea for more than an hour? Or Black? The two people who manipulate you the most.

HERA (NAR.)

She's angry. She's just talking to talk.

PERS

I'm not gonna lie, I didn't think you'd hold out with Apollo this long. I was actually kind of proud of you.

HERA
It's not... simple.

PERS
Did you ever forgive Iris?

HERA
Yes. Pers, I don't want to talk about this anymore.

PERS
Oh, really? What would you rather talk about, Rhea?
That's the only person you've really worried about since this whole thing started.

HERA
She's my sister.

PERS
You two say that like it's something you earned.
Someone killed Iris. Someone killed Dion. They're dead and we don't know who did it or why- it could be Eros- who's probably being waterboarded right now- but no, let's worry about Rhea. Who CHOSE to leave because SHOCKER she was only thinking about herself.

HERA (NAR.)
She now leans a few inches from my face.

HERA
I don't know how to help them.

HERA (NAR.)
I murmur, uselessly.

PERS
You're just afraid to fail. Again.

HERA (NAR.)
She throws that last part out so casually it takes me a few moments to register what she means. I recoil from her. I need to go back to Apollo and the warm bed. I need to be out of here. But she lunges forward, grabs my wrist.

PERS
Let's figure out what happened to them.

They want to find Rhea. I hate to break it to you, but she looks guilty. And the fact she tricked Clark-

HERA

She didn't do this. She didn't-

HERA (NAR.)

And my then my blood turns so cold it stops running.

HERA

How did you know he goes by Clark?

HERA (NAR.)

Persephone smoothes her slack face to a ghost of it's old, guarded self.

HERA

How would you know she tricked him? Neither that or his nickname has been disclosed.

PERS

Hera, it doesn't-

HERA (NAR.)

But before she can say more, I'm on my feet. I grab her shoulders.

HERA

You've spoken to her.

PERS

No I haven't. Not since she was leaving-

HERA

Where was she going?

PERS

I don't know. I swear I don't know.

HERA

Why didn't you stop her? Why didn't you tell anyone?

PERS

I didn't think she'd really-

HERA (NAR.)

And without thinking, I slap her. Hard. Across the face.
I feel a large pair of hands on me and hear Char's voice in
my ear.

CHAR

Hera. Breathe.

PERS

You should be glad I let her go.

HERA

What the fuck is that supposed to mean?

PERS

I'm helping you.

HERA (NAR.)

But before I have time to ask another question, the door
slides open and two armed guards grab me.

SCENE 3

RHEA (NAR.)

My eyes are shut but my other senses are having a fucking
field day in the split second before I wake up.
The sound of birds is like something out of "Snow White".
My cheek is resting on the smooth skin of Clark's chest. I'll
let that bother me later because- oh my god. I smell coffee.
I sit up abruptly, and my back aches. It was going too well.
I open my eyes and am just a few feet from Rebekah. She
grins, holds out a steaming mug.

REBEKAH

It's black, that's the only choice.

RHEA

Sounds familiar.

RHEA (NAR.)

She opens her mouth too wide for such a small laugh.

REBEKAH

Ha.

RHEA (NAR.)
I hesitate before sipping.

REBEKAH
I'm not trying to poison you. If I wanted to kill you I would have left you.

RHEA (NAR.)
She promises. I sip. She nods, holds a finger to her lips. I turn and Clark is curled a few inches away from me. Rebekah jerks her head towards the door. It's daytime, he'll be okay. I'll be right back. I follow her out into the early morning sunshine.

SOUND: BIRDS, LOUDER.

REBEKAH
Nice huh?

RHEA (NAR.)
It's strange to see so many trees unimpeded by concrete and asphalt. All the other structures are made of wood, much of it mismatched. It doesn't look good, but it does look less... manufactured than anything I've seen in awhile. Ever. A group of women fill plastic water jugs by a spring. I suddenly look down at my coffee.

REBEKAH
Don't worry, we still purify it... How was your night?

RHEA
Fine.

REBEKAH
You looked pretty comfortable.

RHEA
Your intelligence is way worse than I thought if you think he's my type.

REBEKAH
He does seem to be a lot of work for you. Especially since Eros proved to be more capable than you thought.

RHEA
He didn't kill Iris.

RHEA (NAR.)
I snap, my voice in strong contrast to the idyllic chirping around me.

REBEKAH
I only meant that they were copping after hours. Which we knew even before Persephone's post.

RHEA
Well, it does seem like everyone knew about that except me.

REBEKAH
Who do you think did it?

RHEA
Them. Either directly or... I don't know what would have made Eros do that but it must have been their fault.

RHEA (NAR.)
More women about Rebekah's age and slightly older walk past. Rifles slung over shoulders. They nod to the two of us.

RHEA
Who are you guys?

REBEKAH
Oh Rhea, we're the mothers.

RHEA
Of what?

RHEA (NAR.)
But she says nothing, just stares at me. There's a beat... then another... then...

RHEA
Oh shit. You're my... surrogate.

REBEKAH
I carried you.

RHEA
We have met before.

REBEKAH
Oh, we're pretty familiar.

RHEA (NAR.)
We were never allowed to ask about the carriers and it hasn't been a job that was hiring in my lifetime.

RHEA
You're all... mothers.

REBEKAH
Genetically, no. All over what remains of the world though. That's where we are. It's a nasty part of the deal. They offer you money, a place to stay, a sense of purpose... but after it's done... you're exiled. Think they worried we'd have too much influence. We thought influence was just what we wanted, and that's how it was started The Void.

RHEA (NAR.)
Staring at these middle aged women, it's hard to imagine they're the ones who've been terrorizing people for a decade.

RHEA
Did you carry Hera too?

REBEKAH
Nope.

RHEA
I'd always thought, I guess I never imagined us having any different parentage at any point down the line.

REBEKAH
Maybe that's why you're so different. You spent too much time listening to my thoughts.

RHEA (NAR.)
I study her profile, half searching for the familiarity I saw in Hera everyday.

REBEKAH
It isn't a bad thing.

I respect Hera for her dedication to her principles, but she has misused her power. You all had such potential, but most of you squandered it. Feeding into a system that clearly isn't working. I know to you, we just look like a bunch of old ladies. But we're planning something big. We had someone on the inside. But they'd gotten cold feet. Said the death of Iris shook them up too much. Now wasn't the time etc. etc. As if time is something we have to waste.

RHEA
Someone is helping you?

REBEKAH
Was. As of last night, they're dead.

RHEA
Someone... someone died last night?

RHEA (NAR.)
A million names run through my head. She would have told me sooner if it was Hera. She'd have celebrated if it was Black-Eros? Isn't he safe and locked up? She wouldn't play this game. Or would she? At this exact moment, a woman runs up to her.

WOMAN
Where the hell have you been?

REBEKAH
What is it?

WOMAN
The mission was botched. The wrong person was killed.

RHEA
Who?

RHEA (NAR.)
I ask, throwing my coffee from my lap. The woman looks from me to Rebekah.

WOMAN
The chaperone, Dion.

RHEA
Dion? Holy shit.

RHEA (NAR.)
And I am disgusted by how relieved I feel. The door behind us swings open and Clark exits.

CLARK
Everything all right?

RHEA (NAR.)
And I collapse into his arms, knocked down by the wave of panic that's just crashed over me.

REBEKAH
Fuck. FUCK.

WOMAN
He'll be too scared to talk now.

RHEA (NAR.)
The woman reasons with the seething Rebekah.

REBEKAH
We won't be safe until he's dead.

END OF EPISODE