

Lesser Gods Chapter 9

By

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SCENE 1

SOUND: DEVICE RINGING

HERA (NAR.)

I wake up- sorry, I just want to take a second to enjoy saying that. I'll take the victories where I can.

Apollo reaches over me and grabs my ringing device. He scans it for a moment before silencing it and burying his face in my neck. I sit up abruptly.

HERA

Who was it?

APOLLO

Good morning.

HERA

It could be-

APOLLO

It wasn't. It was just Artemis.

HERA (NAR.)

He turns his face up to me.

APOLLO

And as much as I would loveeee the rare chance to hear her voice, she wouldn't have any Rhea news.

HERA (NAR.)

I lay back down beside him.

APOLLO

I love watching you wake up.

HERA (NAR.)

He lays an arm over me.

HERA

When have you ever woken up before me?

APOLLO

I love seeing you while I wake up.

HERA  
Better.

APOLLO  
Let's fall back asleep so I can do it again.

HERA  
We have work to do.

HERA (NAR.)  
I protest.

APOLLO  
Let's do the whole night over again.

HERA (NAR.)  
He traces kisses from my shoulder to my neck. I turn to him, run my fingers along the side of his face, wonder how I stayed at a distance for so long.

HERA  
You have 15 minutes.

HERA (NAR.)  
He pulls me on top of him and kisses me. I'm just starting to rethink my time limit when-

SOUND: RING.

HERA (NAR.)  
There's someone at the door. We both freeze.

HERA  
I have to get that.

HERA (NAR.)  
He pauses, then nods. I search for anything more appropriate to wear, throw on pants and speed button a blouse as I run for the door.

SOUND: RING.

HERA  
Persephone.

HERA (NAR.)  
She stands in the sun, eyes hidden by huge sunglasses, two guards beside her.

HERA  
Good morning.

HERA (NAR.)  
I stutter.

PERSEPHONE  
More like good afternoon.

HERA (NAR.)  
She says while pushing past me and into the house. The guards follow her closely.

PERSEPHONE  
No. No. This is a private meeting.

HERA (NAR.)  
She hisses.

HERA  
Is this really necessary?

HERA (NAR.)  
I ask the guards.

GUARD  
I'm sorry but-

APOLLO  
I can supervise.

HERA (NAR.)  
They freeze when they see Apollo, who descends the stairs but keeps his distance from me. I can feel him wanting to throw his arm around me or grab my hand, but it's against one of the new rules. I can see the guards run every possible scenario in their heads before-

APOLLO  
It's fine.

HERA (NAR.)  
He reassures them.  
They nod and exit. Persephone removes her sunglasses. Turns to Apollo, who is suddenly seeming drill sergeant serious.

PERSEPHONE  
I'm sorry to interrupt.

HERA

It's fine. I'm glad you're here, actually. I wanted to-

HERA (NAR.)

But she whips up her hand to silence me.

PERSEPHONE

Don't. That slap sounded too satisfying to apologize for...  
Apollo... how are you today?

APOLLO

Just, looking to get to work. But first, uhm, coffee.  
Would you...?

PERSEPHONE

Yes.

HERA (NAR.)

I nod and Apollo leaves. Strange.

HERA

Sorry, I don't know why he's being so weird.

PERSEPHONE

I do.

HERA (NAR.)

She chirps as she enters the living room. She drags her  
finger tips over Rhea's books.

PERSEPHONE

Do you regret turning them in?

HERA (NAR.)

Guess we're getting right into this.

HERA

Yes.

HERA (NAR.)

Better to stay direct until I can figure out what game she's  
playing.

PERSEPHONE

Even though they were lying? Even though there was a chance  
they did it?

HERA

But that wasn't why I did it. Rhea and I had just had an  
argument. She said something... really cruel.

PERSEPHONE  
Shocker.

HERA  
Can I ask what this is about?

HERA (NAR.)  
Her voice might seem calm, but her busy hands and darting eyes give her away.

PERSEPHONE  
Char was in contact with The Void. Well, more than just in contact.

HERA  
What? That's impossible.

PERSEPHONE  
Now you know too. Now it's your problem and mine.

HERA  
How did you even find out about this?

PERSEPHONE  
He told me. He's terrified. Apparently The Void tried to kill him after he backed out of something.

HERA  
What? When?

HERA (NAR.)  
If she wasn't hanging onto a copy of Homer's "Odyssey" with white knuckles, I'd think she was completely calm.

PERSEPHONE  
When they missed and killed Dion.

HERA (NAR.)  
And something behind her eyes snaps. She turns away and replaces the book on the shelf. When she faces me again, she is completely composed. In control.

HERA  
Pers... I can't imagine.

PERSEPHONE  
What do we do now?

HERA  
I... think we should think very carefully.

PERSEPHONE  
Obviously I want to turn him in. He got his dumb ass into this mess and Dion died for it? Fuck that.

HERA  
But... they killed him. Someone else picked up a gun. Although you have every right to be angry with him.

PERSEPHONE  
So you don't think I should tell anyone?

HERA  
You can do whatever you want. But, don't let your anger motivate you. I promise it isn't worth it.

HERA (NAR.)  
Apollo enters with a tray of mugs.

APOLLO  
What're we talking about?

HERA  
You should give us a few more minutes.

APOLLO  
But-

HERA (NAR.)  
Again, he stops himself from saying more. This- trusting me to make my own choices- is another rule.

APOLLO  
I'll be upstairs.

PERSEPHONE  
I see you're training him better this time.

HERA (NAR.)  
I let that go.

HERA  
What else did Char say about The Void? What were they having him do? Was it the stunt at Iris' memorial?

HERA (NAR.)  
She responds to my rapid fire questions by calmly lifting a mug.

HERA  
What if they... what if they killed Iris?

PERSEPHONE  
Char doesn't think they did.

HERA (NAR.)  
I take a deep breath before speaking again.

HERA  
Rhea didn't do this. She couldn't have. I saw her fall asleep here. Even if she woke up and what-? Went over there? For what reason? She wouldn't have known about Eros and Iris, they were fine that night.

PERSEPHONE  
I no longer think Rhea is guilty.

HERA  
Oh... good.

PERSEPHONE  
Hera, who do you think did it?

HERA (NAR.)  
And for the first time in days, I realize-

HERA  
I don't know. Eros makes the most sense-

PERSEPHONE  
We know someone else was there after Eros, thanks to the tapes.



HERA (NAR.)  
Eros didn't do it. I'm so relieved that I don't have time to feel guilty.

HERA  
What tapes?

PERSEPHONE  
Wow, they really haven't been telling you anything. There are these tapes... Like audio journals... Iris made them. They talk a lot about her life and feeling better and... you.

HERA  
Oh.

HERA (NAR.)  
The image of Iris sitting alone in her room, no chaperone or friend to confide in, telling herself it would all be better soon... hurts.

PERSEPHONE  
She said someone was coming over AFTER Eros. But we don't know who that is. Had to be someone she trusted.

HERA  
So not some masked figure from The Void.

PERSEPHONE  
Char seems fairly certain they didn't do it. In fact, after the murder they became obsessed with him helping them expose some secret of Black's.

HERA  
You think she did it.

PERSEPHONE  
She's been more than a little off lately. And she's the person who keeps sending me off in nine different directions. Seeing whatever will stick. Besides, she's one of the only people with a motive. And Iris would certainly let her in.

HERA  
But, sure she's... rattled... but she's the fucking president.

PERSEPHONE

She's been involved in a murder before. I heard her and Detective Blue discussing it. It would explain why every time I talk to her she's pushing me towards someone new. And the syringe, she's the one who told me-

HERA (NAR.)

Persephone stops.

HERA

What syringe?

PERSEPHONE

She told me they found it in your trash.

HERA

That's impossible.

HERA (NAR.)

I feel a nervous prickling in my cheeks.

HERA

If it wasn't me or Rhea-

PERSEPHONE

Someone must have put it there. Or had someone else put it there. Who's controlling all the information here?

HERA (NAR.)

And if it wasn't for all the theories and ideas crowding my brain- I would stop to mention how very much Persephone is sounding like my sister.

HERA

What do we do next?

PERSEPHONE

We find out what exactly Char was supposed to expose. He was supposed to meet someone and receive some kind of file- but he never went.

HERA (NAR.)

She sits back on the couch, crosses her legs.

PERSEPHONE

Then we find out which buttons to push.

HERA

We don't know anything about The Void. If Rhea- Rhea.

HERA (NAR.)

I turn to the shelves. Scan them, wish they were organized in any way... find her Beckett collection. I pull them down and carry them over to the couch.

HERA

Start flipping through these and looking for notes.

PERSEPHONE

Are you serious?

HERA

It's all we have to go off. Rhea was a bigger fan of theirs than anyone. If she knew where to find them she might have-

HERA (NAR.)

I take a short, quick breath.

HERA

What if... what if that's where she went? To find them?

PERSEPHONE

I'm not looking for Rhea. I want to find out who killed Iris.

HERA (NAR.)

She says shortly. Although I haven't touched my coffee, my brain finally wakes up.

HERA

If we contact them- If we find them, we find out the truth about Black. AND we might find Rhea.

HERA (NAR.)

Persephone sits forwards, curls her fingers around her cup.

PERSEPHONE

And where do you propose we start looking? They could be anywhere out there.

HERA

No, no. Black and Orsino have already done half the work for us. We go where they haven't.

PERSEPHONE

We don't have access to the information regarding their search.

HERA  
But I know someone who might.

HERA (NAR.)  
And before she can ask, I call out-

HERA  
Apollo!

HERA (NAR.)  
As he descends the stairs, Persephone leans forwards and whispers.

PERSEPHONE  
Contacting The Void. Trusting him. Not sure what's more dangerous.

HERA (NAR.)  
And her lips curl up into a smirk that reminds me, no matter what she says or does... I cannot fully trust her.

## SCENE 2

CLARK (NAR.)  
Here's the thing I've learned about Rhea; she doesn't hesitate. She's quick. With her jokes, with her retorts. Her insults. Her opinions. Her actions. All summoned from somewhere inside her the moment they are requested. Tonight is perhaps the best example of this. Where I'm from, food was a necessity. A bodily function only a little more pleasurable than pissing and sneezing. Well, I mean sneezing is kind of- nevermind. Eating was a chore- but dining... That's something I never really experienced. I think I've seen hundreds and hundreds of photos of The Five at various dinner parties and banquets. But between all the images of cocktails and toasts and what not, one comes to mind in particular. It must be from a year or two ago... Iris is dead center, of course, looking unbelievably gorgeous, pristine... and in a totally different world than everyone else. Persephone is just to her left, downing a drink as she smiles at someone off camera. Charon is holding Rhea, who's lying sideways and biting Eros' ear. He's laughing, red in the face. I just remember thinking, those people aren't surviving- they're fucking living.

RHEA  
Clark.

CLARK  
Yes?

RHEA  
You have to continuously stir.

CLARK  
I am!

RHEA  
As the artist of laziness, I promise you aren't.

CLARK (NAR.)  
I stir the sauce on the iron stovetop and catch myself staring at her, moving around our small space more purposely than gracefully.  
Obviously Rebekah wasn't keen on giving us many supplies. We joined her and the other Void members for luke warm... stew? I want to say... in the make shift mess hall for dinner. For dessert though, everyone was given a chocolate biscuit. Rhea, being Rhea, conned everyone out of theirs'. As militaristic as they may seem, even they get star struck. Rhea told stories about prank calling Black and compared tattoos in exchange for their biscuits.  
Getting the chocolate for melting was slightly easier. She feigned a burning in the cuts on her arm to get seen by a nurse who she then somehow convinced the hormones from all the drugs she gets given give her... some kind of cravings... Whatever Rhea did, it worked... It's good to see her being herself... This small mission has distracted her from whoever Rebekah has had killed... She lays the biscuits on the floor in a pattern.

CLARK  
The floor?

RHEA  
We're going for aesthetics here.

CLARK (NAR.)  
She responds.

RHEA  
Pour the melted chocolate into this.

CLARK (NAR.)  
She hands me a metal mug.

RHEA  
Also, I snagged...

CLARK (NAR.)  
And from somewhere behind her back, she reveals a mostly full bottle of wine.

RHEA  
I got really "lost" on the way to the bathroom and tucked this into my pants.

CLARK  
How long has that been in there?

RHEA  
You're welcome.

CLARK  
Do we have cups?

RHEA  
I'm sure my mouth germs are no worse than the floor germs.  
Cheers.

CLARK (NAR.)  
Her fingers brush against mine as she passes me the bottle.

RHEA  
You know, dessert is kind of like the most uselessly extravagant meal we could have tried to make.

CLARK (NAR.)  
She takes the wine back from me. Sips. Smiles.

RHEA  
Alcohol.

CLARK (NAR.)  
I dig a cookie into the ramshackle chocolate fondue.  
It's surprisingly good.

CLARK  
So, at all those dinners... what is it you actually did?

RHEA

I mean, drink. Talk. Rub elbows with the officials and doctors whose jobs it is to watch us cop. Nothing interesting.

CLARK (NAR.)

I nod. Curiously relieved. I half expect every question I ask to lead to a charming Eros anecdote. But they've slowed. It's not that I'm jealous of him or anything, it's just... thinking of him seems to make her sad. You know?

RHEA

Let's play a game. Every time you say something that surprises me- I drink.

CLARK

En vice versa.

RHEA

Yes.

CLARK (NAR.)

I think, go with something easy.

CLARK

I've never hit anyone.

RHEA

Nope. Not surprising.... I HAVE hit someone.

CLARK

That isn't surprising.

RHEA

What if I told you it was Apollo?

CLARK (NAR.)

I consider this and drink.

RHEA

Alright, alright! Now we have a game.

CLARK (NAR.)

My first thought is this must be Iris related, but I play dumb-

CLARK

Why?

RHEA

Once me and Eros were really high- and we were just sleeping. Apollo came in, freaking out, he grabs my arm, hard, and I just popped him.

CLARK

You just... popped him.

RHEA

Full on Rocky mode.

CLARK (NAR.)

I laugh without getting the reference.

CLARK

Okay...

CLARK (NAR.)

I keep myself from taking a deep breath, I don't want this to seem more dramatic than it needs to be.

CLARK

I have been in love.

CLARK (NAR.)

Her jaw nearly hits the floor.

RHEA

Just give me the whole bottle.

CLARK (NAR.)

I pass it to her.

RHEA

I'm going to need some details.

CLARK

I had a series of tutors.



RHEA  
This is going to be good.

CLARK  
She was the gen above your sister.

RHEA  
The lost batch?

CLARK (NAR.)  
Her face falls.

RHEA  
Sorry.

CLARK (NAR.)  
The gen just before Hera was small. Maybe a dozen or so. They were modified heavily before birth... they were all quite sick. Most of them didn't even make it to 20. They were named after some kind of rock... a strange joke considering the hard, short lives they lived.

RHEA  
What was her name?

CLARK  
Obsidian.

RHEA  
Well if you think that's a hot name, I can't wait to hear your real one.

CLARK  
Ha. Ha.

RHEA  
So you and this woman got cozy reading the Constitution?

CLARK  
It was never physical. It was obvious how I felt, how she felt. I was 20, she was 35... We were adults... Have you heard of those?

CLARK (NAR.)

Rhea laughs and flips me off.

CLARK

She was in fairly good health for one of them. We wanted to make things more official. We approached Falstaff about it, but before he could make a decision she was... relocated. I wish there was more of a story to tell, but it was pretty uncomplicated. She had long dark hair she kept pulled back, exposing her swanlike neck. Multi hour long conversations, promises we never got to make good on...

CLARK (NAR.)

And I take a step back from those memories, because there's no point in indulging them now.

RHEA

I'm sorry.

CLARK

It was years ago. For the best anyway.

RHEA

Do you know where she is now?

CLARK

No.

RHEA

Do you care?

CLARK

No.

CLARK (NAR.)

She raises her eyebrows. Drinks.

RHEA

That surprises me.

CLARK

You go.

CLARK (NAR.)

She hands me the bottle.

RHEA

You're going to want this... When we were 19, I found out Apollo and Iris were fucking.

CLARK (NAR.)

I make a show of taking a big sip.

RHEA

I was the one who found them. It was... insane. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. But then again... After being viable for like five years and no success, I guess we were all having an existential crisis. But... that. I never thought Iris would do something like that. Without even thinking I told Hera. And lately, I've been wishing I hadn't.

CLARK

She needed to know, besides better you than anyone else.

CLARK (NAR.)

She takes a moment to continue. I think about the fight I overheard between Hera and Apollo, how deep those wounds still seem.

RHEA

I never stopped to think how this would effect her. Maybe I should have let Apollo tell her... or like... talk to him and Iris... Hera hasn't been happy since and it's only made everything harder for her. No, I was... happy to tell her. Happy to wreck Iris and not realize it would destroy my sister too.

CLARK (NAR.)

I open my mouth to reason with her... but... based off of our brief history I know there's no way I'll say the right thing. Instead, in the silence that follows, I take the bottle and chug.

RHEA

Stop!

CLARK (NAR.)

But I keep going, she lunges at me, I swat her away. She gets within a few inches of my face as she pries the bottle from my lips.

CLARK

(BREATHING HEAVILY FOR A MOMENT)

You surprised me.

(BEAT)

No matter what you think now, you must have done it for the right reasons then because of how much you clearly love Hera.

CLARK (NAR.)

I take another huge swig.

CLARK

As much as you pretend otherwise, you are good to people you care about. Look what you did for me tonight... and you barely care about me.

CLARK (NAR.)

I smile and she takes the nearly empty bottle from me, grabs me by my chin and pulls me closer to her. A few inches from her dark eyes, I see her hesitate for the first time. But within seconds, she presses her lips to mine. Still kissing me, she buries one hand in my hair while the other traces its way down my back. I have no idea what to do with... anything. Clumsily, I pull her into my lap- difficult because she's taller than I am. I resign myself to letting her lead, simply wrapping my arms around her. She pulls away from me for a second, I smile. And imagine that this too- is living. I lean in to kiss her again but she turns. Pushes herself away from me.

RHEA

I'm- I'm really sorry. I wasn't thinking. This isn't... I need some air.

CLARK (NAR.)

I have a million questions, but I can't find the words to ask any of them.

RHEA

I'm going outside.

CLARK

That door isn't even open-

CLARK (NAR.)

But when she pulls on it, it is. Fantastic. Glad she can get away from me as fast as she needs to.

### SCENE 3

SOUND: DOOR SLAMMING

RHEA (NAR.)

Why did I- how... I don't know why I do the things that I do. Clark is nice. Clark wants the right things... Except me. Sometimes the things I want are so loud, I can't hear why it is I want them. What was I doing back there? I just wanted his lips on mine and... more. For one time. Not twice or three or four times. I thought about that. Thought I could have him once and it would be harmless because it wouldn't harm me. I don't know what that would have meant to him. Not everyone is as fucked in the head as I am. I'm his only friend in the fucking world and I was going to make things... complicated for him just because I could. Because of the way he sees me. I wanted to feel that- to feel what it's like to be loved as someone I am not. But I would be taking something from him I couldn't give back. Fuck. I'm an idiot... Did leaving make it even worse? Can I just go back in there and say "Sorry. I had a little wine and talked about Iris and you said I didn't ruin my sister's life for kicks and then I was going to fuck you because I'm an emotional black hole." I mean, look he's ABBA and I'm the Sex Pistols. And I don't mean that in a good way. I just mean that if you played us at the same time you'd want to rip your ears off. Why... Why wasn't that door locked?

REBEKAH

Late for a stroll.

RHEA (NAR.)

Rebekah is just to the left of me. Smoking a cigarette. She holds one out to me.

REBEKAH

Is everything okay?

RHEA

Why would I tell you? Why should I trust you?

RHEA (NAR.)

The cigarette rejected, she drops her arm. Looks away.

REBEKAH

I was trying to kill Charon.

RHEA (NAR.)

My heart stops. And then it thumps slowly. Char. Char. Char.

REBEKAH

But, the mission failed. Persephone's chaperone was killed instead.

RHEA

Dion.

RHEA (NAR.)  
I breathe.

REBEKAH  
I guess.

RHEA (NAR.)  
She says unmoved. Persephone. She must be devastated. I can't even picture it.

RHEA  
Why are you doing any of this? You want power so bad? Wait a few years and everyone will be dead.

REBEKAH  
Why is it you loathe the cause so much?

RHEA  
Are you kidding me? I have done so many things I hate. For them. For *the cause*.

REBEKAH  
Of course you have. We all have. But, I'll admit for you and your friends it's been worse... Still, it's been a long time since you really wanted to... save the species.

RHEA (NAR.)  
I bark out a laugh.

REBEKAH  
I'll tell you why, it's because of how they've made you.

RHEA (NAR.)  
She approaches me.

REBEKAH  
Is that why you do the things you do, Rhea? Why you can't tell why you make the choices you make?... Because you think if it isn't something you want... it must be something they want.

RHEA (NAR.)  
I refuse to even blink for her.

REBEKAH  
It doesn't need to be this struggle, you vs the world. The world can work with you.

RHEA  
I don't need-

RHEA (NAR.)  
But she cuts off my feeble response.

REBEKAH

Look what they've done to your sister. What they're doing to Eros. Even Iris... say what you want about her but they engineered her to be who she was. They wanted her to be fragile. Someone who wanted the world to be fixed so badly she broke herself.

RHEA (NAR.)

Iris. That's all she wanted. Was to help. And I hated her for it. I hated her so much because I couldn't stop being so angry. She fucked Apollo and Eros and hurt my sister. But the magnitude of my... envy was so much greater than all of that.

REBEKAH

It isn't your fault you hated her.

RHEA (NAR.)

She reads my mind.

REBEKAH

They needed her fragile, just like they needed you angry. The more time you spent rebelling against the little things- the less you spent thinking about the big picture.

RHEA (NAR.)

For a moment, I imagine another Iris. One who didn't have to be here.

REBEKAH

What happened when the virus struck?

RHEA (NAR.)

She drags me from my thoughts.

REBEKAH

People waited in lines for pills and vaccines and half of them died before they got to the front. In the aftermath, people stayed... organized. Huddled in their homes, practically snorting antibiotics. So, so, so afraid of being sick. Not realizing that dependence would create the bug that wiped the whole species out. By the time the bug came, everyone was so scared and so confused, they had no choice but to fall into the lines those in charge drew.

RHEA

I don't under-

REBEKAH

I'm not done... How many people are there left in the United States? In the world?

RHEA (NAR.)

I know a rhetorical question when I hear one.

REBEKAH

You can't say, because they won't tell you. They want to keep and control all the information so people think they need them. When you're confused, you're scared, and when you're scared you can be manipulated.

RHEA

It doesn't matter how many people are left. They're all old. A baby hasn't been born in a hundred years. And something tells me there won't be one in another hundred. You're too late. There's nothing worth fighting for left.

REBEKAH

That's only what she wants you to believe... but if there really is so little left, why not take one last big risk?

RHEA (NAR.)

She stamps out her cigarette, watches the heel of her boot crush it into the dirt.

RHEA

What is it you want?

RHEA (NAR.)

And when she looks back up at me, the faint light catches her high cheek bones, casts deep shadows on her face. Her smile seems to come from a skull.

REBEKAH

Chaos.

Rhea, I need you to think of all the lies they've ever told you. And then I need you to hear the one that's going to change your life and help me change what's left of the world.

**END OF EPISODE**