

# Chapter 51

**21th of December - Winter Solstice**  
**New Rome**

Clarisse La Rue faced off against Orion, the Bane of Apollo and Artemis, her fierce gaze unwavering. Orion, with his muscular frame and handsome features, looked almost human, but his bronze mechanical eyes gave him an otherworldly menace. "You think you can defeat me, little warrior?" Orion taunted, drawing his black composite bow.

Clarisse roared in response, charging at the giant with her two-meter double axe raised high. Orion's arrows whizzed past her, one grazing her arm and drawing blood, but she did not falter. Her axe met his bow with a resounding clash, splintering the weapon in two. Orion retaliated with a punch that sent Clarisse sprawling, her armor cracking under the force.

Struggling to her feet, Clarisse wiped the blood from her mouth and snarled. She swung her axe with brute force, each strike fueled by her unyielding rage. Orion, however, was too strong. He danced around her attacks, laughing mockingly as he toyed with her.

"Is this the best you can do? Pathetic," he jeered, delivering a kick that sent her crashing into a boulder.

Clarisse's vision blurred with pain, but she forced herself to stand. She could feel her strength waning, her body battered and bruised. Orion circled her like a predator, his mechanical eyes whirring with each movement. "You are no match for me, little girl," he sneered, his voice dripping with contempt.

In a desperate move, Clarisse lunged forward, swinging her axe with all her might. Orion caught the handle with ease, twisting it out of her grasp and tossing it aside. "You fight with heart, but heart alone is not enough," he said, his voice cold and mocking. He struck her again, and she crumpled to the ground, gasping for air.

Pain wracked her body, each breath a battle against the overwhelming agony, but Clarisse's fury only grew. Her vision blurred with red-hot rage, and she let out a scream that pierced the very heavens, a cry of defiance and unyielding spirit. The sound echoed across the battlefield, silencing friend and foe alike, as if the very earth trembled in response to her primal rage. Her scream was not just a cry of pain but a summons, a call to the ancient powers that lay dormant within her.

As if heeding her call, a mystical surge of energy erupted from within her. It began as a subtle vibration, a tingling sensation that quickly intensified into a roaring torrent of power. The ground beneath her feet cracked and split as purple flames burst from her skin, spiraling and dancing around her like sentient beings, wrapping her in a cloak of raw, untamed energy. The air around her crackled with electricity, the sheer force of her transformation sending shockwaves through the ground. Her armor, previously battered and broken, seemed to fuse with the flames, becoming part of her new, fearsome form.

Clarisse's muscles bulged, her form expanding with the energy coursing through her veins. She grew taller, her body stretching and strengthening until she towered over Orion. The purple flames continued to blaze around her, transforming her into an avatar of fury and power. Her eyes burned with an unearthly light, glowing with the intensity of a thousand suns. Her roar of transformation echoed across the battlefield, a declaration of her newfound might. Now a giantess of blazing purple fire, she stood ready to bring her wrath upon the enemy, her very presence a testament to the unstoppable force she had become.

Orion's eyes widened in shock as Clarisse, now standing taller than him, raised her axe once more. The weapon, glowing with the same purple flames, cut through the air with lethal precision. Orion attempted to block, but it was too late. With a single, powerful swing, Clarisse beheaded the giant. His body crumpled to the ground, lifeless.

Breathing heavily, Clarisse looked down at her fallen foe, the purple flames gradually dissipating. Her eyes were wild with the thrill of victory, her body covered in blood and sweat. She raised her axe in triumph, a primal scream tearing from her throat. Against fate and destiny, she had awakened something deep within her, something that made her unstoppable.

The battlefield fell silent for a moment, the demigods and monsters alike staring in awe at the sight of Clarisse, towering and triumphant. She turned her gaze to the remaining enemies, her eyes burning with determination. "We fight for ourselves! For our friends! For our home!" she roared. "We are more than just heroes—we are legends! We! Are !Free!"

With renewed vigor, the demigods surged forward, inspired by Clarisse's transformation. The tide of battle turned in their favor, the monsters and giants retreating before their combined might. Clarisse, still blazing with power, led the charge, her axe cleaving through their foes with unstoppable force.

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## 21th of December - Winter Solstice Olympus

Zeus struck the ground with his lightning bolt, the sound echoing through the chamber like a thunderclap. "I declare this council open," he announced, his voice resonating with authority. The tension in the room was palpable, each deity bracing for the storm that was about to unfold.

Hera, the Queen of the gods and goddess of marriage and family, sat to his right, her regal demeanor betraying a hint of tension in her eyes. Poseidon, the God of the sea, earthquakes, and horses, sat to his left, his trident resting against his throne, his gaze as stormy as the oceans he commanded. Demeter, goddess of the harvest and agriculture, watched quietly, her expression stern. Athena, the goddess of wisdom, war strategy, and crafts, sat with her eyes sharp and calculating. Apollo, the god of the sun, music, poetry, and healing, appeared relaxed, but his fingers tapped nervously on his lyre. Aphrodite, the goddess of love, beauty, and desire, radiated an almost tangible tension, her beauty momentarily overshadowed by the grim atmosphere. Hermes, the god of trade, thieves, travelers, and the messenger of the gods, looked unusually solemn, his usual mischievous glint absent.

Hephaestus, the god of fire, metalworking, and crafts, sat with his muscular arms crossed, his face a mask of grim determination. Hades, god of the underworld and the dead, sat apart, his dark presence a stark contrast to the others, and beside him, Persephone, the queen of the underworld and goddess of spring growth, held an unreadable expression. Hestia, the goddess of the hearth, home, and domesticity, was the only one not on a throne, standing near the fire, her presence a calming yet solemn one. The absence of Artemis, Ares, and Dionysos cast a heavy shadow over the assembly.

Athena rose from her throne, her grey eyes flickering with determination. "**We should open the floor with the disappearances of Artemis, Ares, and Dionysos,**" she proposed, her voice clear and steady.

Zeus inclined his head, his gaze piercing. "**Indeed, Athena, thou shouldst put that forward,**" he said, his tone carrying a weight of accusation. "**As thou knowest where they are.**"

A murmur of confusion swept through the room. Athena's eyes widened in surprise. "**Pardon?**" she asked, her composure faltering for a moment.

Zeus's expression remained kingly and unyielding. "**Yea, thou shouldst know where they are, for thou art the one who hath kidnapped Artemis and Ares to absorb their essence. And perhaps Dionysos as well—though his energy is diffuse. Mayhap thou failed to absorb him, hmm?**"

A deadly silence fell over the room. The gods exchanged shocked and suspicious glances. The air was thick with disbelief.

Apollo let out a nervous laugh, but it quickly died in the silence. "**This must be a joke, right?**" he muttered.

Hermes leaned forward, his eyes wide. "**Father, this must be a mistake! It is impossible!**"

Before anyone could react further, something thrummed from Athena's throne. Chains erupted from it with serpentine grace, wrapping around her with a speed and force that took everyone's breath away. The chains were forged of an ethereal metal, shimmering with a ghostly light as they slithered up her legs. They started at her ankles, coiling around her muscled calves with a cold, unyielding grip, moving slowly yet purposefully. The first loop tightened around her thighs, constricting the powerful muscles there, the sensation almost tactile to the other gods as they watched in horrified fascination.

The chains continued their ascent, winding sinuously around her torso. They crossed her waist, climbing higher to encircle her breasts, squeezing with a deliberate, almost intimate pressure. Each loop seemed to mock her, the chains pressing against her armor, making her struggles appear both desperate and futile. The final coil wrapped around her shoulders, binding her arms to her sides, leaving her entirely immobilized. Ganymede, Zeus's cupbearer, appeared behind Athena, his sword raised high, ready to strike.

Zeus's voice thundered through the room, invoking the power of divine law. His form switched, and his voice gained heaviness. **"Athena is to be executed for high treason against Olympus,"** he declared, his words final and absolute. The room was frozen, the gods held in place by the sheer force of Zeus's will.

In the blink of an eye, Hermes, the only one fast enough to react, darted forward, his caduceus staff blocking the blade just inches from Athena's neck. **"Tu quoque, fili?"** Zeus asked, his voice a mixture of surprise and anger.

Hermes laughed nervously, sweat trickling down his brow. "Father, this is too premature. We haven't seen any evidence. We can't just execute her without a trial! We owe it to the very principles of justice and fairness that Olympus was built upon. You always taught us that we must uphold the highest standards. If we execute her now, without giving her a chance to defend herself, how are we any better than the tyrants we've overthrown? This could be a grave mistake."

He knew he was treading dangerous ground, revealing his allegiance to Athena, but he couldn't stand by and watch. "Besides," Hermes continued, his voice steadying as he spoke, "Athena has been a pillar of wisdom and strategy for us all. She's guided us through countless battles, helped us win wars, and has always acted in the best interest of Olympus. How could she suddenly betray us now? We need to investigate further. Maybe there's another explanation."

Zeus's eyes blazed with fury, his form crackling with electricity as he stood up, his divine presence overwhelming. All eyes were on him, captivated by his terrifying majesty. "I am the law!" he roared, his voice shaking the very foundations of Olympus. "I have seen the signs, the evidence within the very fabric of the cosmos! Do you dare question my judgment?"

In the blinding light of his wrath, no one noticed the two shimmering soldiers of Zeus appearing behind Athena. Their movements were swift and precise, shadows in the blinding illumination. As Hermes tried to continue his plea, the soldiers moved in a coordinated strike, their blades cutting through the air with lethal efficiency.

In a swift, unseen motion, they beheaded the goddess. Her head rolled on the marble floor, a silent testament to Zeus's unyielding justice. The council room plunged into a profound silence, the weight of betrayal and divine retribution hanging heavy in the air. The gods sat frozen, the brutal display of power and the sudden execution leaving them in a state of shock and fear.

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## **21th of December - Winter Solstice**

### **New Rome**

The battlefield was a cacophony of chaos as the twin giants Otis and Ephialtes, Bane of Dionysus, squared off against the demigod twins Castor and Pollux. Otis, his green hair braided with golden and silver coins, sneered at the demigods. "We were conceived to kill Dionysus. You two are mere insects before us," he taunted, brandishing his ten-foot spear.

Ephialtes, with his long purple hair and the same deadly sneer, added, "You think you can stand against us? We were made to destroy a god. You don't stand a chance." The giant twins laughed, their voices rumbling like thunder, but their mirth was cut short as Castor and Pollux looked at each other and burst into uncontrollable laughter.

Castor, wiping a tear from his eye, chuckled, "You think you're on the level of Dionysus? That's hilarious!" The more they laughed, the stronger they seemed to become, their joy and mirth amplifying their strength. As they reveled in the absurdity of the giants' boast, an aura of power surrounded them, their bodies glowing with a vibrant energy.

To the giants' astonishment, Castor's form began to change. He became more animated, his movements fluid and exaggerated, like a character from an old cartoon. He dodged Otis's spear with impossible agility, his body stretching and bending in ways that defied logic. With a mischievous grin, he extended his arm like elastic, punching Otis square in the jaw with a comically oversized fist. "Is that all you've got?"

Pollux, meanwhile, uncorked a bottle of wine and took a long swig. "You want a show? I'll give you a show," he said, his voice melodious and captivating. As he began to sing, the very air seemed to pulse with the rhythm of his song. Drums thrummed and the ground vibrated with the beat. Pollux danced more than he fought, his movements graceful and mocking. He weaved through Ephialtes's attacks, each step a masterful dodge, each twirl a playful taunt. "Dance with me, giant!"

The giants, bewildered and enraged, tried to strike the demigod twins, but their efforts were futile. Castor's cartoonish agility made him an impossible target. He bounced off the ground like a spring, stretched his limbs to incredible lengths, and delivered blows that sent Otis reeling. "You're too slow, big guy!" Castor taunted, his voice echoing with laughter. His body twisted and turned, defying all laws of physics, each movement more absurd and unpredictable than the last.

Pollux's song grew louder, the rhythm infectious. He danced around Ephialtes, the beat of his song resonating through the battlefield. "Come on, keep up!" he mocked, his voice laced with melody. Each time he sang a particularly powerful note, Ephialtes stumbled, the giant's heart thrumming painfully in response to the music. Pollux's dance was a deadly ballet, his every move a step in the giants' undoing. "Is that the best you can do, Titan?"

The fight was becoming increasingly one-sided. Castor, in his cartoon form, delivered a final, exaggerated punch that sent Otis crashing to the ground, lifeless. Pollux, his song reaching a crescendo, leaped into the air and brought his foot down in a devastating kick, crushing Ephialtes under the weight of his dance. The beat of the drums ceased, and silence fell over the battlefield. The twins stood victorious, their power and absurdity having turned the tide of battle.

As Castor reverted to his normal form, he shook his head in disbelief. "Looks like the joke's on you, giants," he said, smirking down at the fallen enemies. Pollux took a final swig of wine, his satisfied smile growing wider. "Indeed, brother. Indeed. Let's get back to the real party."