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HEKATE



THE WITCH



NIKITA GILL

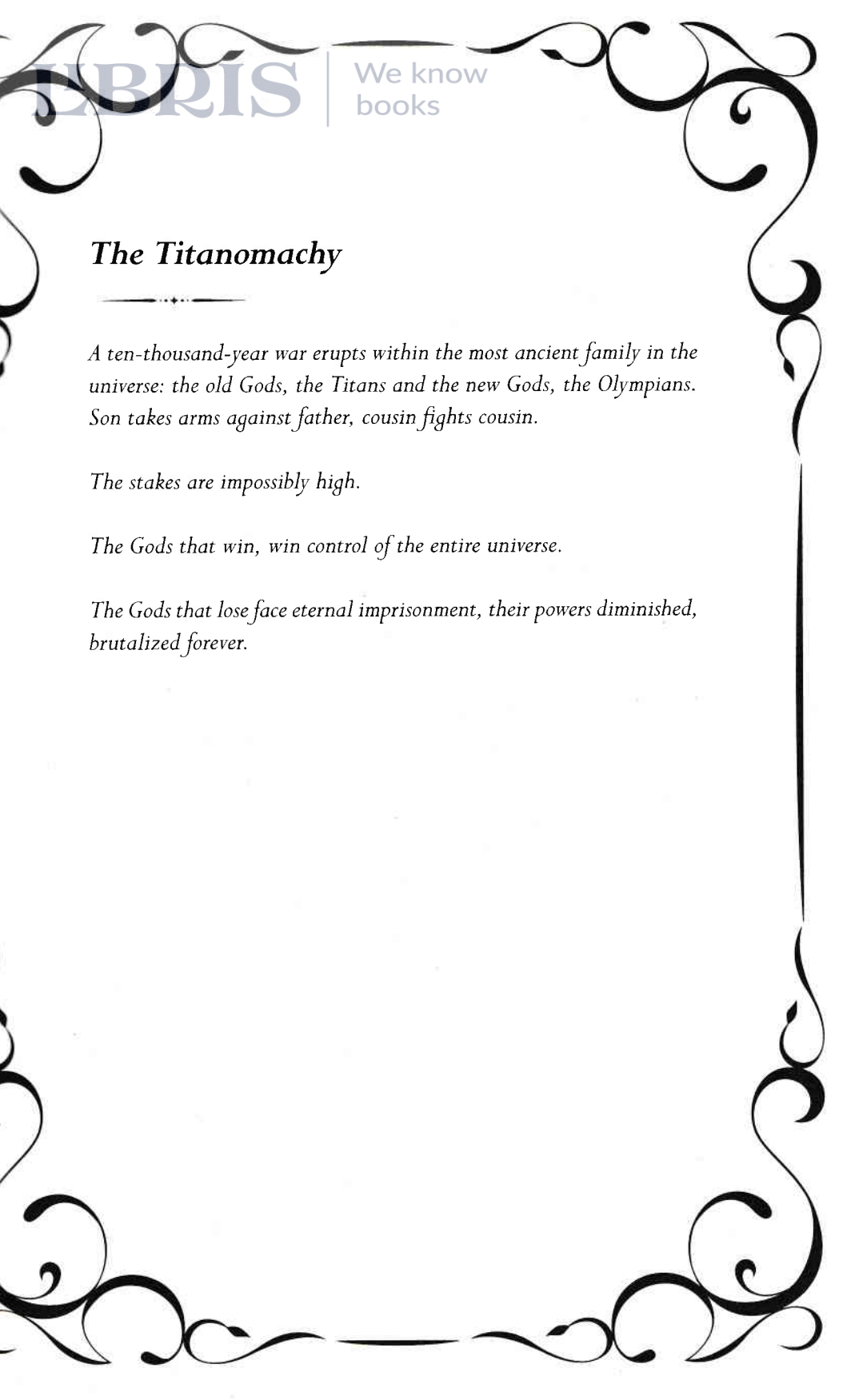


SIMON &
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Dramatis Personae

Hekate	Goddess of Magics, the Crossroads, Keys, and Necromancy; daughter of Perses, God of Destruction, and Asteria, Goddess of Falling Stars and Night Oracles
Styx	Goddess of the river that brings the dead into the Underworld
Pallas	consort of Styx; God of Warcraft
Charon	ferryman of the Underworld
Thanatos	God of Peaceful Death
Nyx	Goddess and personification of the Night
Hermes	herald of the Gods
Hades	God of the Underworld
Demeter	Goddess of the Harvest
Kore	Goddess of Spring; daughter of Demeter
Hecuba	Queen of Troy
Cerberus	hound of Hades; protector of the gates into the Underworld



The Titanomachy

A ten-thousand-year war erupts within the most ancient family in the universe: the old Gods, the Titans and the new Gods, the Olympians. Son takes arms against father, cousin fights cousin.

The stakes are impossibly high.

The Gods that win, win control of the entire universe.

The Gods that lose face eternal imprisonment, their powers diminished, brutalized forever.

Prologue

This is an ancient story written long before us.

It is a tale full of Gods and monsters,
divine wars and ghosts,
a tangled mess made
by the divine and the mortal,
mothers and daughters,
the sacred and the courageous,
wounds both healed and unhealed
and the grief that grows
in the absence of love.

There is joy and friendship too,
homegrown and pieced together
by careful, gentle fingers.

At the heart of this story
is a girl looking for answers.

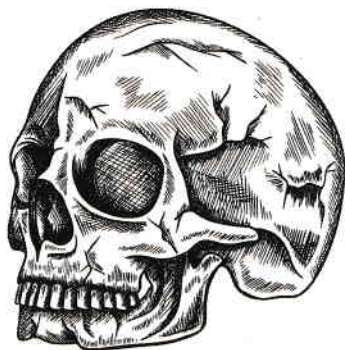
At the soul of this story
is the divine Goddess within us all.

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A CHILD OF WAR

—◆—
PART ONE



The Day I Was Born

The universe was on fire.
And the reason for this burning
was a family at war with itself.

They called it the Titanomachy.
The war between the old Gods
and the brand new.

Brother against brother,
sisters torn apart,
fathers fighting their children.

And what place does an infant
have among such bloodshed,
such divine terror?

They say on Earth that *ichor*,
the Gods' golden blood,
rained from the sky.

They say that forests
turned from emerald green
to gilded with God-blood.

No one knows
how to stop a war
when you are immortal.

Which is why the universe burned
and as far as the eye can see
there were only embers. And ash.

Mother

was the Goddess of Oracles
and Falling Stars.
On the night I was born
she was all alone.

Her cries were heard by no one
as she drew me wailing
out of her womb,
wrapping me in her arms.

A thousand stars fell
together from the cosmos.
Some called it an omen,
others called it a blessing.

My mother knew better.
Her immortal body already
healed after the birth,
she carried me to

the balcony of her chambers.
As she held me in her arms
we watched a silver shower
rain across the midnight sky

behind the blazing fire
of a ten-thousand-year-old war.
She told me the stars fell

because she had granted
a thousand wishes in my name.

Father

was a God of Destruction.

Ancient and unbroken,
stronger than the core of the cosmos.
The most legendary of the Gods.

And this is why the new Gods
wiped out the stories about him.
A story is a powerful thing.

It can lead to another war
or even resurrect the strongest
of all your enemies.

He was a God so formidable
that the Titans knew no one
but he could win them this war.

My mother said she never believed
any different about my father.
She told me he had never lost

a game of dice, let alone a battle.
I was too young to understand this then.
But sometimes we tell ourselves

the most beautiful lies
just to survive the terrible things
that we are living through.

Home

Children born in wars
are made of a different kind of clay.
We become used to the din.
We grow used to the collapse
of crumbling buildings
and fire and develop a compassion
for broken things.
How can we not when we know
nothing else?

My mother raised me
in a palace where the marble floors
cracked under
the distant clash of God weapons,
adamantine against adamantine.
The cloud-coloured pillars
that held our home up
were disintegrating from the roars
of the heavens above us.

I was told these hallowed halls were
once visited by a thousand giggling nymphs
and hundreds of glittering deities.
But now it was just a haunting
where only my mother and I lived.
When the call to war came,
the Gods, my uncles and cousins, left.
Eventually everyone had to pick a side.
Most of the Titans chose to support my father:
it was after all the Titan God-King
Kronos who they served.
But some Titans betrayed their own.
They took up arms against us,

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choosing to side
with Kronos' children,
the Olympians.
The new Gods.

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The Children of Gods

are born into deathless eternity.
Our fathers hold us up to the light
and bless us with our purpose as babes.

Our paths are chosen for us
long before we are even conceived,
but at my birth my father was long gone,

fighting a war so far away
he wasn't even there to watch his first child
take her first steps into this world.

My mother told me,
'You are special, my daughter,
which is why you must find your own purpose.

You are no ordinary child.
You are destined for greater things.
A path you must carve alone.

You are not yet a Goddess, Hekate.
That is a divinity you must seek.
And you will find it one day for yourself.'

I think that even then,
she knew what would become of us.
I think she had foreseen the end.


That Last Day

when it was just me and my mother
in behind those crumbling walls,
we found solace in a hidden garden
still untouched by burning ichor.
This secret sanctuary was full of herbs
both magical and mortal.
But my mother's prize
was her soft grey moly flowers.

Legend will tell you that the moly herb
is what Odysseus used to protect himself
from my cousin Circe's magics.
But it was here, in my mother's garden,
that the first sapling of magical moly grew.
It was once a plant grown
only by Goddesses of Prophecy.
It smelt like a mix of lavender and rain.

I can still picture my mother's face
as she took mortar and pestle,
ground the leaves into nectar
and gave it to me to drink.
'I promise you
it will make you strong.
Stronger than anyone
Or anything that you see.'

I would drink the sweet
lavender-honey-rain drink
every time she gave it to me.
I once asked her,
'Why do I need such strength?'
But she turned away

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to hide the tears
that fell silently.

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When the Messenger Arrived

the sound of his broken wings echoed
across this dilapidated palace.
When she saw him,
my mother *knew*.

He wore my father's sigil
and when we rushed to help him,
he put his hand up to stop us,
his body crumpling to the floor.

We reached him just as
his bloodied mouth opened,
as the ichor from his wounds
pooled at his feet.

'All
is lost.
They are on their way.
You must *run!*'