Klutch is meditating, floating, still on the river.

Izar asks Klutch if she can ride the river into the ethereal plane.
Klutch opens one eye and looks over, still in her meditative stance. She takes the horn she's been holding in one hand, slips it into a pocket, stands on the water and thinks a second. She reaches out to Izar's stomach. "Are you willing to part with this?"
"I don't know what it does. Will I need it? I don't know if I can part with it."
"I cannot take it, but I can receive it?
Do you think it's a good idea?
I cannot take it, but I can receive it.
Okay. Sure
Klutch touches it, and it comes off into the mist, and attaches itself to Klutch.

She turns to Darnit. "Are you willing to part with it?"
Darnit isn't sure what its meaning or use is, and wants to know before parting with it.

She turns and asks the same to Ego.
Ego thinks a moment, touches the gold on her head, and says, "If you would have it, I am willing to part."
It again slides off Ego's head, and joins Klutch's head and remaining horn.

She turns to Hiare and asks.
The gold comes off of Hiare, but instead of attaching itself to Klutch, it becomes a large oar.

She turns to Hrothulf and asks.
Hrothulf says, "Well I understand that you cannot demand it, but I am hoping that you will accept it if I offer it. But my question is, do you desire my... golden accoutrement?
"I do."
"And if so, for what service."
"I'll show you, she says ominously."
Hrothulf stands back and folds his arms, and raises his stony magman eyebrows.
"It's a question of faith. A leap of trust."
"Isn't a question of trust, a leap of faith? I am open to it, however, what we here heretofore have is an incomplete set of armor. Will that be sufficient for your display?"
"Yes. May I have it?"
"Very well."
She reaches out and Hrothulf's gold melts, and in the style of the abyss is floats over to her and melts onto her.

She returns to Darnit.
"Well, you have the trust of the others. I just hope this is the right thing." And he holds his hands out.
She nods, receives Darnit's gold, and as she does, she is completely encapsulated in gold, looking pretty much exactly like the knights we met before, but instead of armor, it's more like robes. At which point, the

raft on her river also becomes coated in gold, and with her oar, she says to us, “You may cross to the other side.”

We all go to cross, stepping on the rickety gold raft.
Hrothulf: It appears you’ve taken on a new form. Shall we still call you by your old name?
Klutch: What else would you call me?
Hrothulf: Charon?
K: Very well.

And we go on a ride across the river. It is a wide river, too hard to cross, and we notice the sky darkens as we start to cross the river. And we see little lightning bolts of green electricity in the clouds now. And when we start to approach the other side a field of golden wheat opens up to us, just as eternal as the previous spot we were in. And there is again this ambiguous sense of it feeling like a really long trip, and also like “wow we’re there already” at the same time.

As we reach the other side, Klutch tells us that we may disembark, but she is not coming with us.
“I was willing to bet a confederate dollar that this was the end of our time with Klutch.”
“Oh, fear not. We’ll meet again, and you’ll cross in earnest then. But my calling and my purpose has been made clear and I’ll be staying here. I’m counting on you to make my calling worthwhile. You, as the branch, awaken the gods, then I can continue to ferry the dead.
“What, if I may ask, since we spent years in the bone hallways--what is your current calling and status, Charon?”
“I am to pilot this vessel and usher those lost to the mortal plane to a new home in this afterlife.”

Darnit gives a forearm to the bicep in warrior solidarity.
Ego says, “You have my respect. All any of us can hope to do is find our purpose eventually.”
“So you shall,” Klutch says.

Klutch tosses something to Hrothulf. He deftly catches it and sees it’s a skull, missing the bottom jaw, but it’s a runt kobold skull. She tells him, “Just a small thank you for keeping me afloat in the midst of my fears. I think it’ll make a fine bone broth for you one day.”
“Indubitably. It was an honor to serve beside you in our quest.”

Izar: “I hope we meet again one day in the kingdom of the gods.”

“Izar, can you give this to my grandfather?” she says, handing her broken horn. “Tell him I have arrived.”

The urn that we saw in the ethereal plane is now ready and waiting for us just beside the riverbank.
Klutch points to it and says, “Somebody’s got to finish the story. And I believe you are the ambassadors to the gods now.”
There’s a flash of green lightning in the fog, after which we can’t see Charon anymore, and the river is gone.

Ego turns her gaze to the urn and says, “Onward?”
Ego starts walking toward the urn, saying, “It seems our purpose might lie here right now.”
It looks like the same urn, except that the horses are of obvious, distinct color, apart from the makeup of the urn.
Darnit says we should each take the horse that best matches our character. Viridian is probably Ego.
Ego says, “I’ve sought to prolong life, though I’m not sure I’ve sought to rule it. Though I could. Seek it, that is. Not overthrow death.”
Darnit: “I’m going to take Scarlet. Conquering death through strength.”
After some convincing, Izar agrees to take the flaxen, being better at hiding than Hrothulf, anyway.
Hrothulf will take the humble tawny colt, seeking a worthy pen for an account of the deeds.

Darnit walks up beside the scarlet horse and puts his hand on it. Looking at the stonework, he notices it can spin. He begins to spin the horse, and halfway through, a giant cavalry of scarlet steeds appears on the hillside. They line the horizon, and begin marching toward us.

Hrothulf grabs his thing and gives it a twist. It pops right off, and now he holds a horsehead, the mane of which is like a feathered quill.

Ego observes the pale viridian horsehead, almost like a polished, milky jade. She notices there’s a kind of marbling throughout the horsehead that’s not present throughout the others. She takes the horsehead in hand and turns it.
When she does, she instantly thinks of the entrance to Teresias’ tomb and his key.

Izar flips her horse as well, and suddenly knows -- there’s an escape route, a way out.

Ego says, who has the key. Look through it, or perhaps, look upon it.
Izar takes out the key and looks upon it. The seven charges are all charged, and Izar has the sense that he can store and release beings into the key--the last ability that was unclear before.
Izar tries to store the scarlet riders, but they are not willing.
Izar calls on the dead from the tomb, and where the river was, starts crawling out an army of green, ghastly riders, still bearing the scars of what killed them. We can hear a gasp of excitement, and a murmur growing throughout the army that a worthy battle has finally come, and perhaps their names can finally be remembered.

Izar says, “There are your adversaries!” And she suggests Darnit command them, being a warrior.

Ego notes that the key’s gems are all extinguished. She says to Darnit, “Be careful with that key.” Darnit flashes an offended look.
Ego turns back to the urn and tries to take the lid off. It is so heavy, but it’s not affixed on anymore. She has another flash, and it’s something about ‘The handle is not strong enough yet.’ The handle must be the figure in the middle.

Hrothulf suggests we all put a hand on it.

Ego says that we may need to protect it from the errors of the riders. Not only the scarlet riders, but be on guard against the other temptations as well. Fear not only those temptations you can see, but also those you can't.

Darnit assesses the oncoming army and sees the vast and patchwork army from all different walks of life, from the four corners. They appear as though, with vacuous eyes they search for direction.
Having ample experience in formations and how a standing army might withstand a cavalry, and also considering that they are ghosts, Darnit seeks one that looks with confidence and competence in how they're holding their weapon, and finds one (played by Idris Elba, holding a 9-ft halberd), named Jim. "Tell me, are you able to do a partial permeation?"
Reaching through Darnit's chest, he says, "I guess so."
Commanding, Darnit says, "I am the one who holds the key, and you are going to fight this army."
"But who are we?"
"You are the ones who are going to fight and defend the goddess of death."
"And under what standard do we fight?"
"The standard of Teresias!"
He starts a chant among the army to Teresias, and here and there we can see flags with keys on them.
Darnit explains the formation they are coming in, and tells them what to do.
Jim: "I've seen this. We're going to lose some good men today." Darnit knows this is inevitable.
"In the name of Teresias, I hope you find your peace."

Darnit decides that, given his relationship with these warriors, he will rally based on his experience, that they will gain a name as all warriors desire, and victory.
Darnit: "We have already reached the land of the dead, and by taking part in this battle you are not only fighting for life, but you are fighting for death. You have the power to overcome, by your death, that we the living can only dream. I ask you to lend your power by my guidance, having seen many wars and made it out unscathed. I will lead you into victory with the might that you have achieved through your death."
Jim turns to the army, who seize their chant, and says, "We've got home field advantage! This is our land!"

Darnit organizes them, with the plan that they will permeate the horses with their bodies, and attack with their weapons. They will line themselves in waves (like a river!) and realign to attack those who got through the previous lines.

The army disapparates their bottom halves and starts on into formation, and forward.

Hrothulf takes out his great sword and with the pen, on one side writes, "Have no fear," and on the other side "Onward to victory." As he raises the greatsword above his head, the letters jump off the sword and ascend into the skies so that the words are visible to the entire army as they charge.

Darnit sees his waves are very effective. As the knights on top of horses are taken out, the horses turn to red sand and drop to the ground. Darnit's forces are still getting used to what it's like attacking in this form, and some do fall.

Izar is watching and waiting with vigilance.

Ego puts a hand on the lady atop the urn and one on the side of the lid, testing it for when it might lighten. Upon touching the maiden, Ego hears her speak to her and says, “I’m just not strong enough yet.”
Izar hears this too, and more.
Izar has a strong sense that she’s very near (like, the lady atop the urn).
“She told me she’s hungry. What did she tell you?”
“Oh! That she’s not strong enough.”
Izar has been sitting atop the urn, straddling his small horse head. He climbs down to the ground and pokes himself to bleed on the ground, and stalks of corn are growing up, and Izar starts collecting and husking corn.
Ego, both aloud, and through her mindlink circlet speaks to the maiden saying, “What do you need?”
She says, “I hunger.” And immediately Ego thinks:
“You know what, if the ghost army can deplete the population of the cavalry knights, I’m pretty sure I could take over those knights and have the cavalry for myself.” That thought is also accompanied with, “And this whole labyrinth could be yours. And maybe, the rest of this branch--maybe I’m the only one whose the actual true branch, and they’re the imposters, and maybe with this army I could get them out of the way, and I could build this place into something truly amazing.”

After witnessing the first wave, Darnit commands that the first wave turn and attack from behind, chasing, and encourages them, with the success of the first wave, to be emboldened. He even encourages them to practice permeating each other to avoid any casualties as they fight.
The second wave sees an amazing amount of success, and midcharge Darnit recognizes that the cavalry has adjusted. Hope against hope, Darnit hopes they can hear him and shouts that they should switch into wedges and feint. He’s hoping they can understand what he’s saying, but he’s really not sure that they can hear him.
[At this part, Ego is pretty sure that they have thinned out enough for her takeover]

Hrothulf sees that the army is about 150 yards away, and sees Darnit’s tactics. Hrothulf holds his flaming greatsword in one hand and goes around to the captains of the ghost army, working his way down the ranks and writing things on their swords like, “Unbending”, “Unbroken”, “Victorious”, and things of that nature. He hopes it will be the pen making the sword mightier. In a flash of irony, he decides to write “Unbending” on a sword that’s warped, and he sees the sword itself straighten.
He is also able, over his shoulder, to throw a couple pointers to Izar on how to husk the corn, because he’s being really inefficient. “So if I can give you a pointer there in your cornhusking quest, you just gotta rub ‘em up… give ‘em a good rub down there Izar! Just stick em between your legs if you need to.”
It works like a charm.

A number of the knights have intentionally dismounted to attempt the ground game, and they are woefully overpowered as though they have nothing to fight for. We watch as red knights are hewn, with puffs of red all over the place.

Izar has successfully husked his corn, singing a corn-husking song. Izar puts the ears of corn against the lady. The lady does not want mortal food.

Ego looks upon this strange sight, half hoping it'll work, and half hoping to buy time for her takeover. Speaking to the maiden, "Where does this temptation come from? It is so present here. Steel me against it, you and the goddess, if you are not the goddess."
Everything in Ego's sight is saturated in the horse's color -- everything in her vision has this pale viridian overlay, as though that's the answer to her question.

Izar: "Anyone got any god food? What do gods eat?"
Ego: "Devotion or sacrifice?"
The maiden: "What do you devote to me?"
Ego: "Myself, or what I control of me."
Maiden: "And what do I have to gain, if you forfeit your soul?"
Ego: "I'm sorry, who are you?"
Maiden: "What's in it for you?"

Darnit -- the sense he's getting from this battle is that it's been an overwhelming force that the cavalry was not strong enough to fight against. He gets a sense of inquiry as to whether he should take prisoners, or if it should be a full wipe battle. They are super amped and confident, wanting to know what to do.

Darnit takes the rope off his body, and takes it to the most able-looking warrior, with "Victorious" now written on his battle-axe.
And Darnit says, "We need one. Tied hands to feet behind him."
"Ah, the horse or the rider?"
"The rider."
"Sorry, we're a bit rusty."

Hrothulf comes over to the urn, with Ego and Izar.
Izar -- if she is to feed on the souls of the fallen, how do I get those?
Ego: The key? Maybe they will come into the key.

Ego suddenly has perfect recall of the moment when Bruno received the army into the key. It was a request with a promise.
Ego: "Surely this was a battle worth fighting. If they free the goddess of death, they will be remembered forever."

Izar asks for the key, or that Darnit call the fallen to the key, as it will free the lady of death and surely that is a worthy cause, for which they will be forever remembered.

Darnit is hesitant, as his army is still fighting, and he wants to take one hostage to ask questions.

Izar: “Well, we won’t call that one soul yet then.” [to the goddess] “How soul-hungry are you, anyway? Having not acquired souls before for a goddess, I’m not sure how much to bring.”
“You may devote to me what you think is worthy.”
Darnit: “I don’t think you have to worry about losing a soul,” he says, and he pulls out his axe.
Darnit concedes that the goddess can probably answer questions anyway, and gives up on hostage taking. He blows the horn to that effect.

Hrothulf is defending, and looking at his pen, seeing if it’s responding to anything that’s going on.

Ego is very into this idea of the army’s souls feeding the goddess, and not her soul.
Fearful of the temptations clouding her mind, she pushes the viridian horsehead back into its locked position. It pushes back, and she passes out, falling to the ground.

Izar observes Ego. He finds nothing physically wrong with her, except that she’s unconscious and unresponsive.
Izar to Hiare: “Have you ever collected souls to feed to a goddess?”
Hiare: “Well, not to feed a goddess, but to line up and organize by size and color, yes.”

Darnit, knowing victory is near certain, glances over and sees Izar tending to a passed out Ego, and sees the one horsehead in its locked position.
“Why is the urn locked?!”
“Ego did that. She said something about psychological warfare. But then, why did she do it. To shut the god up or something? She said something about psychological warfare and temptations, then she locked it and passed out.”
“So I think of my experience in dealing with prisoners of war, especially those who they want answers out of. So I’m thinking about ways Ego might have been acting that speak to this.”
“Yeah, she said something about temptations. Like some kind of tempting offer that might go along with what you're saying.”
“The temptation to lock the urn and not let the goddess out?’
“Maybe. Do you think that’s what the goddess would want though?”
“I don’t think it was the goddess who was doing it. I have a feeling each horse at least brought the spirit of the rider to life.”

Hrothulf gets the idea to take his pen and write ‘strength’ or something of the sort on there. But his pen doesn’t work. He tries licking it, but then it’s wet and doesn’t work. He tries shaking it, and using it to draw on the sole of his shoe, but not it’s just wet, dizzy, and disgusted, and not writing.
Hrothulf tries to write on his armor, or on Ego, but it won’t write on any of these.

Hrothulf puts his horsehead back in its place.

[Who said this?? Or is this a notetaker's comment? ;) ] [Izar?:] Why are you putting your horseheads back? Why are you guys doing that? I’m so offended. I just feel like you guys are trying to block me out. I had a way to do it, and how you guys are trying to shut out the way.

Hrothulf takes the horsehead back out. It is a pen still. But it also still doesn't work.

The army is all dead by now. Everything has been dusted in red sand from the ~2000 horses and riders.

The passed out Ego hears the voice: "Why do you seek to keep me entrapped?"
Ego: "I seek to stop the voices of temptation. Better to entrap you than to conquer."
"How is temptation best defeated?"
"Changing one's form? Changing oneself? That's my MO, anyway."
"Would you rather suppress the voices into silence or transform THEM?"
"Is that an option? Teach me how!"
"I trust your perseverance if you are willing to fight."
"I am willing; heal my un...willingness. I am willing."
"Then you must eat."

Ego briefly awakens and, from her depths, calls out, "Feed me! Feed!" in a weak and trembling mumble, then passes out again.

Darnit goes out to hype up the army for their resounding victory, and to pay honor to those that are fallen again. Maybe they will meet up with Klutch. They'll just need the goddess of death to usher them.
Darnit grabs the sand to study it. It's cold. So cold. He brings it over to the urn and asks, "Does this satisfy you?" No one says anything. He drops it gingerly on top of the urn, in front of the statuette. "I've defeated this army that came after you, following the rider on the red horse, and I offer their remains." It felt good. Nothing happens, but it felt good.

Darnit recommends we each make an offering in line with our rider.

Izar says he offers his soul?

Hrothulf is trying to figure out how to offer tribute with a pen that doesn't work. "Indeed I would love to tell your story, but it seems there is no lead in my proverbial pen." There seems to be an empty inkwell.

Izar goes to Ego's horse to unlock it again.

Ego again says, "Feed me. Feed."

Hrothulf finally feeds Ego the corn. She awakens. The corn is delicious. She gets her bearings, wants to know what's happened, and asks whether we've gotten the army into the key. We have not.

After much appeal, Darnit takes the key to the fields and puts it among the red dust. "Souls defeated by our blades, enter into your rightful place."

Those words of Darnit just showed up on the urn!

[To Sandstorm] The red sands start to swirl around Darnit, and he feels the key raise up. He's holding onto it, but it's pulling him, so that he is no longer kneeling but standing. All of the sand of the field, including the stuff that was dusting atop the urn, forms one giant red horse, and then the horse leaps into the gem of the key, sending Darnit flying yards and yards and yards. He tumbles to the foot of the urn, holding this key, the gem glowing a bright red.

And the gem quietly loses its color. And as the last of the sand drips out like an hourglass on top of the maiden and seemingly disappears as soon as it touches the maiden, the entire lid rattles, and we hear this gasp of air shootout.

Ego and Izar lift the lid, no longer heavy at all. Izar tosses the lid to the side. And inside the urn, is a black hole--a seemingly endless chasm.

[And then they all died. A dead death.]