

Several of you don't seem to understand that there are *fatal flaws* and regular flaws. Percy getting cocky because he feels he is carrying the quest, so to speak, is natural. He wasn't overly humble or modest in the books, so why should he be here?

Keep in mind what I said about character ages getting changed.

This chapter has been edited by Gladiusx.

As Percy dived underwater, Rachel noticed a flock of birds flying away from the island, heading to the girl on the boat who was stabbing maniacally at the sea monster with a spear. She rushed towards the intercom installed by the bridge, close to the helm, and pressed on one of the buttons.

"Tyson! Battle stations, bring what I asked of you."

She barely waited for Tyson's hurried affirmative before she turned back to the sea. Whatever those birds were, they were big and black with a metallic sheen to their feathers. Their beaks gleamed from the sun as they screeched at the girl on the boat before dive-bombing her, one after the other.

The Hippocampi had swum close to the boat and whinnied for the girl to get on them, but either she didn't hear or didn't understand them as she weathered the onslaught of the birds.

The ship had continued to cruise slowly towards the dinghy, but she had no way of controlling it with Percy in the water. The monster had long retreated to the depths, probably getting eviscerated by its opponent like the many other sea monsters they faced on the way. Rachel did not fear for the son of the Sea God, for he was in his element; she couldn't imagine he would ever face a foe he couldn't defeat in the sea.

Hopefully, Percy would be able to save that girl, though. She looked so *young* compared to her friend.

The ship had gotten close enough to the boat for her to see the features of the other girl fighting off the birds. She was nearly as tall as Percy, with a lithe and athletic build, as well as an olive

complexion. Her black hair was tied in a ponytail, and her onyx eyes gleamed in defiance. She was dressed in an old and tattered uniform that wouldn't have been out of place at one of the resorts and spas her family would visit.

The girl fought with a bronze spear and a large battered shield, yet she wore a haphazard assortment of bronze armor over her uniform. All of this, Rachel perceived in a glimpse as her blood boiled for combat.

One of the birds tried to sneak attack the girl from behind, only to explode when Rachel shot it.

"Hey, you." The girl glanced at the gun-slinging girl for a second before blocking another bird's attack. "Quickly! Hop on the Hippocampus. The sea-horse thing." She added at the girl's confused look, much to the Hippocampi's chagrin.

"Not without my sister." The older girl – for despite her young face, she had to be in her late teens – bashed away another bird. Rachel didn't stay idle as she took accurate potshots at the birds. The birds, however, had started waving their wings mightily and sent pinions of their metal feathers at the boat, causing the woman to hide behind her shield.

"My friend will save her, but you need to get off your dinghy. That sea monster could tip it over any second, and there are hundreds of those birds that will turn it to pincushion!"

Before the maiden could decide, the matter was taken out of her hands when dozens of the metallic birds dive-bombed the boat. The young woman barely had time to grab a backpack and jump out of the rowboat, grabbing onto a Hippocampus' neck. Just in time for the rest of the birds to shred the boat to pieces with what Rachel now realized were Celestial Bronze beaks and talons.

"Quickly, over here." Rachel waved them over while she reloaded her revolvers. Unsatisfied with only destroying the rowboat, the birds began circling their ship, eyeing Rachel with their beady red eyes.

The Hippocampi quickly swam over, allowing the woman to grab onto a rope that Rachel dropped for her. As she dragged her on the deck, Tyson came charging out of the galley, carrying exactly what she needed.

"It's locked and loaded, Rachel." The Cyclops tossed her the abomination of a gun she had him work on, along with a long ammo belt, while he held the silvery scale spoil that Percy got as a shield. Rachel barely managed to aim the fifty pounds worth of gun and ammo and pulled the trigger, unleashing a bullet storm at the birds right as they too rained their feathers at them.

The effect was instantaneous, with hundreds of the metallic pigeons turning to dust. All of them, without fail, dropped their Celestial Bronze beaks and talons onto the deck. By the time the last bird was gone, Rachel was on the ground from the recoil, dry firing into the sky while covered in bits of bird dust.

It was also then that she realized she had her eyes closed, yet she was confident that the entire flock of birds was dead. Opening her eyes, Rachel groaned in pain as she felt something stabbing into her body. She turned her head downwards to find several metallic feathers stabbed into her limbs and stomach. Thankfully, the redhead didn't think she got hit in a vital organ, and her head was clear of injuries. Just as she thought that, a warm trickle of blood flowed from her right temple to the ground. Slowly turning to the right, Rachel sucked in a breath at the sight of an especially long feather drilled into the flooring, not a hair's breadth away from her head.

She felt panic trying to settle in, but then she noticed the girl she saved was staring at her from behind her battered and now cracked shield. It looked like she got out mostly unscathed, and now that she got a closer look at her, Rachel found that the girl was a beauty. Even that wicked-looking scar on her forehead gave her a dangerous charm.

"Hi, I'm Rachel." She croaked out, "Fancy place to go on vacation, huh."

The other girl dropped her shield and ran to her. "Don't speak, you're hurt."

"What?" Rachel could only blink in confusion.

"Name's Hylla, and you look in dire need of Nectar or Ambrosia." She turned to Tyson who was also hurt, but the feathers barely pierced his skin. Lucky him.

"Do you have any – you're a Cyclops!"

Hylla scrambled to draw her dagger, but Rachel found the strength to grab her arm. "It's alright, he's just Tyson. Big, reliable, and softhearted Tyson." Her voice had dropped to a murmur, and she wondered why she was feeling cold and tired.

Oh. She must have lost too much blood.

Heavy steps sounded next to her as Tyson placed a box of something that reminded her of Lembas Bread from Lord of the Rings. He said something she couldn't hear to Hylla, who still looked apprehensive but eventually nodded. They both worked to remove the pinions from her body, which, for some reason, weren't painful. Just a dull throbbing where she was hit.

"Here, Rachel. Eat this." Tyson broke a small piece of Ambrosia and fed it to her. Rachel wondered how Percy would react to her eating one so soon after his warning. The threat of spontaneously combusting was fleeting in her mind...

... for this was the most delicious thing she had ever eaten. As she chewed, the taste changed to multiple different foods she had eaten in the past. All of them were her favorites, starting with the grade A5 Wagyu steak that her father spent a fortune for them to eat to the extra dark chocolate muffins she adored.

Then, another taste hit her like a sledgehammer; this time, it wasn't anything fancy, but rather a simple slice of cheese pizza that wasn't even that good, but the company was what made it taste so memorable. Percy's lopsided grin appeared in her mind as she felt all her wounds seal up and boundless energy rushing into her.

At least she learned that she really was no longer a mere mortal.

Once she felt the healing process end, Rachel stood up, stumbling slightly as she still held the gun in her offhand. Hylla was accepting a piece of Ambrosia from Tyson when an explosion erupted from the water. They rushed to the railing just in time to see a massive squid, easily the size of their ship, float to the surface and gradually disintegrate.

"A Kraken!" Hylla's eyes were wide as she realized what she was fighting against. "But where's Reyna? Where's my sister?"

Another smaller explosion and a waterspout deposited a large figure on the deck. Once the water washed away, Rachel realized it wasn't one figure but two. Percy had Hylla's sister in his arms as the water receded into the sea, healing a few minor injuries on the demigod's skin. The girl, Reyna, was young and short. Maybe twelve or thirteen and dressed in a simple white shirt along with jeans and sneakers. She looked like a precious doll with how cute she was in Percy's arms. Although both of them were drenched in black ink, even as she watched, Percy had it all flow away from their bodies and into a bucket.

"YOU!" The red-haired girl was shocked when Hylla drew her dagger and glared murderously at Percy.

"Uh, what?" The son of Poseidon glanced behind him, confused. "Me?" He pointed at his face, and Rachel had to stifle a giggle at how silly he looked.

"Yes, you!" The sheer venom in the older girl's voice was obvious as she gritted her teeth. "How dare you? Do you have any idea what you and that blonde-haired friend of yours did to us? Releasing all those pirates and scum on our island – what me and my sister had to go through for the past year?"

With each sentence, Hylla had advanced at Percy, who stood his ground but had a thoughtful look on his face.

"Hylla, please. Calm down; we just saved your lives." Rachel grabbed the older girl's shoulder, who sneered at her. "Shouldn't you check on Reyna first?"

Her words finally got through to her as her face softened. It was also then that Reyna coughed to announce her presence.

"Uh, sis? Maybe try not to kill my savior?" At her sister's words, Hylla finally relaxed and sheathed her dagger in shame. Percy let the girl down from his arms, allowing her to rush to her sister in a hug as he looked strangely at the sisters.

"Hylla...where did I hear that name before?" Percy scrunched his face as he tried to remember. "And pirates on an island? It does ring a bell."

"No way, you mean she was right? You pillaged their island with a pirate crew and took off with their gold?" Rachel gasped dramatically, her lips widening in a smile. "Yet you left behind these two cute Latina girls? What kind of pirate are you?"

"The heroic kind." The Captain of the ship had his lips quirked. Tyson chuckled on the side, while collecting all the Celestial Bronze and other spent rounds, while Reyna laughed with childlike glee at the back and forth. Hylla, however, was not amused, but Rachel would like to think she would at least try to be civil for her sister's sake.

"But seriously, the only island where something similar happened was Circe's. That mad witch lied to us when we were lost and needed help. She even turned me into a guinea pig, the misandrist bitch." Rachel guffawed and then laughed even harder at Percy's scowl. "Of course, I would object to that, but thankfully, Annabeth saved me from that fate. Considering those pirates had been imprisoned for three hundred years, I'm surprised they didn't kill everyone on that island. Weren't you her chief attendant or something?"

"Of course I was. I had hoped to start a new life for me and Reyna, and Circe offered it to us and more." There was no mistaking the pride in her tone, "but you still ruined it for us. If it wasn't for my skill at arms, we would've been playthings for those scum. Do you think Blackbeard was the only one imprisoned there? He was a saint compared to the rest he freed."

"While I sympathize with what you've gone through, I refuse to be held accountable for the consequences of *your* actions." Hylla looked like she was slapped while Reyna patted her arm consolingly. "If Circe truly cared about you, she would have saved you and the rest of the workers of that spa instead of teleporting away without even *trying* to fight, the damn coward that she was."

With every word of vitriol, Hylla's face fell, and Rachel felt the Latina girl didn't really have any ground to stand upon. You reap what you sow, and all that. Still, she felt sorry for the older girl, and something told her they were victims of circumstances and simply needed help. Help that was abused by that Circe witch and help Rachel and Percy could provide.

"Why don't we table this for later? I'm sure we all need to shower. I stink of blood and dead birds." She added with a grimace as she sniffed herself.

"Oh, yeah. Are you alright, Rachel?" Percy checked her for injuries. "Obviously, you are, but what's with all the blood?"

"Flock of metallic birds attacked. Bad birdies hurt Rachel. Fed her Ambrosia, and she's better now." Tyson mumbled as he went past them with two large buckets of bronze junk.

"Ambrosia?" He looked closely at her and hummed, "I don't see you burning up, so I guess you're safe." Rachel grinned at him, and he chuckled. "Still, Stymphalian birds, huh? Nasty pieces of work. Oh, Tyson. Catch." He tossed his brother a fleshy sac that had a tube protruding from it. "Spoil of the Kraken. I think it's an ink sac or something. Put it with the rest?"

"Sure, brother."

As Tyson left, Hylla and Reyna approached. "That Cyclops called you brother?"

"Yeah, because he *is* my brother." Percy's tone brokered no argument, and Rachel stepped in before another *debate* started.

"Showers first, everyone, then we can talk."

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After cleaning up and changing their clothes, they all met in the dining room of Percy's cabin. The afternoon sun provided plenty of light through the large windows that encompassed the wall facing the rear of the ship. Rachel had closed the window that Percy had left open to block off the smell of sulfur from the volcano. Snacks and refreshments were provided on the table, but after realizing the two sisters had not had a solid meal for days, they opted to cook some real food. Percy had declared the kitchen his domain while they waited with appetizers in his cabin. He promised to cook what he claimed every red-blooded male should instinctively know how to cook.

The moment he rolled a large trolley full of food into the cabin, he immediately gained a new friend.

"Burgers, Hylla. We're having burgers!" The sheer joy on young Reyna's face was just so precious, and Rachel had to fight the urge to pinch the young girl's sun-kissed cheeks. "And fries. And Dr Pepper! No more celery or hard tack, at last." Hylla smiled indulgently at her teary-eyed sister while she also nibbled on a burger of her own. Percy had outdone himself; the burgers did look delectable. So much so that she was beginning to feel slightly peckish despite the pizza she just ate.

The demigod of the sea had already filled her in on the details of Circe's Island. As she watched the sisters eat, she took a sip from the Nectar that Percy offered her. He had explained that Ambrosia alone was not enough for full recovery, that the energy she was feeling was just a high that would disappear. Nectar was best used for recovery, while Ambrosia was best for healing injuries.

Suffice it to say, Nectar tasted like a multitude of her favorite drinks. From fruit smoothies, ice cream parfaits, and the darkest and most bitter espressos she had ever drank. None of them, however, compared to that coffee that the queen of the gods had offered to her in that meeting a few days ago. It simply tasted *Divine*.

"So, Rachel." She turned to Percy, who had an eyebrow raised. "A Minigun? I could have sworn there were only two archaic Gatling guns in the armory. Where did that come from?"

"Why, Percy, I thought you said you knew nothing about guns." She smiled coyly, taking a generous sip from her Nectar. Rachel had to fight the urge to moan in contentment, and every time she drank, an image of Hera smiling at her appeared in her mind, giving her a warm feeling in her belly.

"I might not be the most knowledgeable about guns, but I've seen Gatling guns in The Last Samurai and Arnie using a minigun in Terminator to tell them apart." He countered back with a smirk. "Is that what you had Tyson work on?"

"It isn't even a Gatling gun, you doofus." Rachel giggled. "I'm not sure what they were, but it only had three barrels. Gatling guns had a lot more than that." Her giggle turned into laughter as Percy's confusion deepened. "I think your father just snapped a three-barreled rotary gun into existence

after seeing it in a video game without caring how it actually worked. I asked Tyson if he could combine them somehow with parts taken from the other guns lying around. Somehow, he made it work like a minigun but entirely manual, no electricity to power the barrels.” The budding gunslinger shrugged, yet she didn't hide the pride she felt for Tyson, who had just entered the room with a tray of drinks, as she smiled at him. The Cyclops set down the tray and smiled back shyly while Percy scratched his head at the long-winded explanation.

“Glad it worked out, I guess, but any reason you didn't tell me?” Percy's smile dimmed slightly, and Rachel realized what bothered him. He thought they went behind his back to do this, but that couldn't be further from the truth.

“I did try to warn you about how ineffective the cannons were, but you blew me off.” The redhead pouted for extra effect and smirked inwardly at the boy's look of guilt. “This was my solution, or at least a rudimentary one, and you cannot deny it was very damn effective.”

“It certainly was. It's too bad I missed it in action.” The son of Poseidon sighed and looked at her apologetically. “I promise to take your suggestions more seriously next time.”

“That's all I ask.” She turned to the two famished sisters as they devoured burger after burger, along with fries and drinks. Soon enough, they were done and switched to desserts – a bowl of fruit salad for Hylla and a slice of ice cream cake for Reyna.

“So, how did you escape from the island?” Rachel asked as she reached for a mug of coffee and poured some sugar and cream.

The sisters halted as they tried each other's deserts. Percy also leaned in with interest from the head of the table, with a can of Cola in hand.

“I had already mentioned how I managed to gain Blackbeard's respect.” Hylla began as she gratefully accepted a mug of tea from Tyson. Thankfully, it appeared the girl had quickly gotten over her wariness of the Cyclops. “I had to prove my skill at arms by dueling him. While I did not win, I did put up enough of a fight for him to acknowledge me. I didn't come out unscathed, however.” She added, pointing at the scar on her forehead.

“Edward Teach was a son of Ares. Many of them have a natural ability in fighting and talents for war.” Percy elaborated for her.

“Indeed. For a few months, Blackbeard ruled as king of the island. He only had six other crew members, all powerful demigods. The pirates released many of the other imprisoned men from their curses, and those were the worst kind, even if many of them were mortals. Blackbeard had explained that the Mist doesn’t work well for mortals when so much ‘divine buggery’ as he calls it, is happening.” The words elicited a few chuckles, and Rachel found herself snorting in amusement.

“Then what?” Rachel whispered curiously as she looked at Hylla’s forehead for a moment. It was a nasty scar dragging from the top of her forehead down over the bridge of her nose and stopping at her right cheek. While it gave the older girl a *cool* look, it was still awful to have her face ruined like that.

Hylla sighed, “To keep a long story short, all the workers on the island were reduced to slaves. Considering they were all women, I’m sure you can guess what happened.” Her scowl was full of disgust, and they nodded morosely. Rachel didn’t need to be a genius to understand what she meant.

“We were safe, though.” Little Reyna added as she drank from a mug of hot cocoa. “Hylla had managed to protect me while she worked for Blackbeard. At least until the dreams started and we planned our escape.”

“Dreams?” Percy looked interested. “Actually, do you know who your godly parent is?”

They shook their heads, and Rachel could tell they were upset about it. “We know our dad was a war veteran, but he had a lot of issues. Frankly, the less we speak of him, the better.” Hylla’s voice was full of contempt, and the red-haired girl could sympathize.

“We don’t get to choose our parents. Not everyone can be as lucky as Kelphead over here with his awesome mom and cool dad.” Rachel elbowed Percy teasingly, causing him to blush slightly and pinch her sides, causing her to yelp. The Latina sisters smiled awkwardly, while Tyson looked completely focused on munching cookies.

“So, anyway.” The demigod of the sea coughed. “What made you leave the island? I mean, despite the pirates and all that, you did say you managed to make a place for yourself there.”

“The fact that they were terrible people? Or the fact that they were all stuck on an island with limited supplies?” Hylla raised her eyebrow, and Percy conceded the point.

“Still, how did you manage to leave? You mentioned dreams, Reyna. If you don’t know your godly mother, it could only be prophetic dreams, right?” The Captain turned to the younger sister.

“That is so.” The younger girl adopted a serious expression that made her look older than she was. “I dreamt of an opportunity for us to escape. It took us some time and planning, but we managed to secretly hide the rowboat you used in a hidden cove and, over the days, filled it with supplies. At the right moment, we sneaked out and rowed away.”

“None of the pirates dared to venture into the Sea of Monsters without a proper ship.” Hylla added, “Blackbeard was beyond furious with the theft of his ship. What happened to it, by the way?” The older girl looked around the cabin with an impressed look. “It looks like you got an upgrade.”

“The Queen Anne’s Revenge? Sunk by way of a giant rock.” Percy took a last sip from his cola before crushing it and throwing it in the trash can. “So, what was your plan after leaving the island? How did you come to be all the way here by one of Hephaestus’ forges?”

“Once we left the island, I also started having dreams. It was the god of forges, giving us a quest.” They all sat up straight at Hylla’s words. Tyson immediately put down the cookie in his hand and leaned over with interest.

“What was it?” Tyson whispered, and Rachel was surprised the Cyclops was so excited. He had stayed quiet all day, probably sensing that the sisters didn’t trust him.

“In return for clearing out his forge from monsters, he would provide us a reward and a boon. I hoped he would give us a new place to call home and thrive.” Hylla’s words were wistful, “He made sure we took as safe a route as possible to the island, yet now I realize that such an endeavor would be nigh impossible. The Kraken and the Stymphalian birds weren’t even inside the forge,

and we would've died if not for you. I'm not sure how I would be capable of killing whatever calls it home."

"And do you know what monsters lie within the forge?"

"Why do you ask, Jackson? This isn't your fight, and the god gave the quest to us." Hylla leaned back defensively, and Rachel had the impression the older girl's pride was the one speaking right now.

"Hylla, did Hephaestus say that only you two could complete the quest?" Rachel laid a gentle hand on the older girl's.

"... No, he didn't." She conceded begrudgingly, "I don't think he cared how it was done; as long as his forge was cleared. Apparently, this wasn't the first time recently that someone would use his forges in secret and disappear whenever he tries to catch them."

"Yeah, that sounds about right. I'd bet a pack of soda that one of the monsters will be Telekhines." At the girl's stiffness, Percy grinned. "Thought so, you don't actually know what awaits you in there, huh?" Hylla slowly nodded with a downcast expression.

"Anyway, Hephaestus is known for his generosity and generally keeps to his word. Even if he isn't the most likable of sorts, at least he won't blast you to ash at the first meeting." Percy added as he stood up and stretched before approaching Hylla and Reyna, who had also stood. "First, let's get this out of the way. There's obviously bad blood between us. I do not believe that I was in the wrong for escaping captivity, and I still find the fact you blame me for it to be ludicrous."

"But you —" Percy raised a hand to stall Hylla's retort.

"However, I also understand your desire to protect your loved one, even if it, in turn, led to you working for an evil sorceress." He gazed gently at Reyna, who smiled shyly. "How about we let bygones be and join forces to clear this forge? Either way, as Captain of this ship, I've given you sanctuary in the form of food and quarters, and now I formally invite you to join my crew. We can both help each other in our respective quests and kick monster butt while we're at it. After that, you can stick with us or go our separate ways. What say you?"

Hylla looked at Percy's lopsided grin and his outstretched hand. She was visibly struggling, and Rachel felt like she was truly interested in the offer. The older girl looked at her sister for support, and Reyna nodded with a smile.

"Oh, alright." She shook Percy's hand firmly. "Reyna approves anyway, and I do admit that it never sat well with me how Circe would treat people just because of their sex. I guess I can count on you, *Captain?*"

"For sure."

Reyna cheered on the side and hugged her sister, and Rachel found herself pumping her fist.

"Yes, I'm not the only girl on the ship anymore! We're gonna have so much fun."

"One thing I don't understand, though, what are you doing here in the first place?" Hylla asked them as they filed out of the Captain's quarters. "You clearly escaped a year ago, Perseus." At the Captain's nod, the older girl continued. "Why would you return to the Sea of Monsters?"

"You're not the only one with a quest. Mine is personal, however, rather than given to me by a god." Percy led them out to the kitchens as they carried the empty and dirty plates and utensils to be washed. "I aim to release Calypso from her imprisonment."

"Calypso?" The sisters echoed, confused, and they explained to them the outline of their quest and why Percy had taken it as his personal mission to free the Titaness.

"Oh, wow. That is so romantic." The younger Reyna had stars in her eyes as she looked at her savior with awe.

"Are you sure you aren't just smitten by her, Captain? I do remember Circe speaking ill of her as a bewitching nymph." Hylla's teasing tone hid uncertainty about the Titaness, but Rachel could tell she was also impressed with his determination.

The Captain froze in thought as they filed out of the kitchens, causing them to stop behind him.

"You know, I'm sick of denying it. Yeah, I really do think I'm smitten with her. I mean, you have to see her to realize how beautiful she is; I've seen the goddess of beauty, and let me tell you, she has

nothing on Calypso.” He chuckled, causing them to snicker. “But really, even if she looked like a gorgon, I would have stuck to my word. I firmly believe her imprisonment is unjust, and after thousands of years, she deserves to be free.”

“Well, we’ve already accepted to join forces, so we will stick with you until you’re done with your quest.” The younger sister nodded emphatically.

They spent the next hour settling the sisters in one of the officer’s cabins with the double beds, as Hylla had insisted they share the same room, then to the armory where they were kitted in proper arms. Reyna shied away from any guns, much to Rachel’s consternation, as it would have been the perfect weapon for the smaller girl. Hylla had no qualms about grabbing a rifle and a revolver for a sidearm in addition to her spear and shield.

Finally, everyone was armed and armored as much as they could and stood on the deck waiting for Percy’s inspection. Or at least that was the plan until Reyna found Blackjack and instantly stuck to him.

“Can I stay on the ship with him?” The young girl looked pleadingly at her older sister, who huffed in amusement.

“I wasn’t really comfortable taking you with us anyway, but it will be up to the Captain to decide.” She looked at Percy, who didn’t need much convincing.

“Sure. Blackjack, you will take care of her, won’t you?” The Pegasus nickered as he bent his knees and allowed the young girl to mount his back. With that out of the way, Percy looked at the rest of them.

“Alright, crew. It’s four in the afternoon, and this has already been a very long day for us all.” The Captain paced on the deck as they stood in line. “Everyone is locked and loaded? No minigun, Rachel?”

“Ha ha hah.” Rachel was not amused. “Too cumbersome. Better to leave it here and count on lighter arms.” She patted a clip-fed rifle that held five rounds, similar to the one Hylla grabbed, and then her revolvers. “It’s too bad your dad didn’t stock the ship with machine guns.”

“But Rachel,” Tyson interrupted from down the line. “We’re quickly running out of Celestial Bronze at the rate you’re going. Perhaps you should conserve the ammo? It takes time to coat the bullets in bronze, and it would always be weaker than an actual bullet made entirely from Celestial Bronze.”

The Cyclops forwent armor and simply had a large Orichalcum sledgehammer as his weapon, as well as a large backpack with their supplies. Extra ammo, a couple of handguns, as well as Nectar and Ambrosia. “Which is why I will be counting on you and Percy for most of the legwork, okay?” The green-eyed girl winked at the gentle Cyclops.

“Alright, I will take point, and Tyson will support me. Hylla, you will be in the center, covering me and Tyson while keeping an eye on Rachel, who I will be counting on for long-range support. Don’t be shy with your ammo, but also don’t waste it on kill steals.” He wiggled his eyebrows at her, causing her to snort, before he returned to Hylla. “Even with the little info that you got from Hephaestus, we don’t really know what to expect aside from Telekhines. Right, Hylla?” At the girl’s nod, Percy waved his hand and released one of two rowboats on the deck from its bindings. “Tyson, help me lower the boat, then we will be on our way.”

Once the boat was in the water and they were aboard, the Hippocampi circled them curiously before Percy waved them away. “Don’t worry, guys, just protect the ship until we’re back.”

The Hippocampi nodded and patrolled around the ship. Soon enough, they were ashore on the rocky island. It wasn’t large; in fact, the whole island consisted of a volcanic mountain with cliffs on three sides and the only coast where they just pulled in. It was less than a mile wide, with only one clear entrance through the mountain, but it was closed by a large metal door that looked like a submarine’s hatch with a large stylized H engraved in bronze.

The heat was starting to become unbearable, and the smell of sulfur was noxious; Rachel was glad that Percy warned them about this as she exchanged a look with Hylla. They were both wearing long-sleeved cotton shirts and pants that protected their skin from the heat, yet were light enough to keep them cool. Combined with a pair of goggles that Tyson somehow made not to fog, they stood at the ready with their rifles drawn.

“From my experience in Hephaestus’ forges, this should be straightforward. We go in guns blazing, and the Telekhines will hopefully be surprised enough not to get the chance to counterattack. Give them no mercy or quarter,” the Son of Poseidon’s voice had a ruthless edge to it as his eyes shone with malice. “They are vile sea demons and, like most monsters, can speak and are quite intelligent, but they will use those abilities for trickery and deceit.” They had already discussed the Telekhines’ abilities while they were on the ship, but Rachel acknowledged Percy’s warnings nonetheless.

Hylla and Tyson also nodded in agreement at their Captain’s warning. “Tyson? Do you want to do the honors? Since you are fire immune and all that.”

“Of course!” The Cyclops lumbered to the door and used his immense strength to turn the massive wheel of a doorknob, causing the door to open. Rachel and Hylla quickly had their rifles aiming at the gap, just in time to find a furry dog-headed demon looking at them in surprise.

Two shots sounded out, and the demon was disintegrating before it knew what hit it. Rachel smiled at Hylla for the quick response before Percy charged inside, followed by Tyson. They hurried after them and found them already engaging in combat with a handful of the furry beasts.

Neither wasted time as they all engaged in what would become an hour-long slaughter fest that would make Furries everywhere shiver in fear.

And we have two more crewmates! I won’t go into detail of the fight next chapter, as I do want them to hurry on to Ogygia.

A quick recap on the character ages:

Percy: 15

Rachel: 14 (younger than Percy by a month. I have placed her birthday in September)

Tyson: 9 (His age is never mentioned, yet we know he spent the first seven years of his life in the streets before he was picked up by that weird school. I'm sure Riordan would claim he's the same age as Percy, but sucks to be him. I'm the Captain now.)

Hylla: 19 (no changes here. She's 22 when she's introduced and Percy was 18 at the time.)

Reyna: 13 and a late bloomer (a full two years younger than Percy). I wanted a mascot for the crew and decided to make the most obtuse character in the later books to be one. Don't get me wrong, I like the girl, but she needs to unwind.

Calypso: Older than the gods.