

THE SIZZLING NEW CHAPTER IN THE
BESTSELLING DARK OLYMPUS SERIES

RADIANT SIN



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HOT.”

—*Entertainment Weekly*

KATEE

NEW YORK TIMES AND USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

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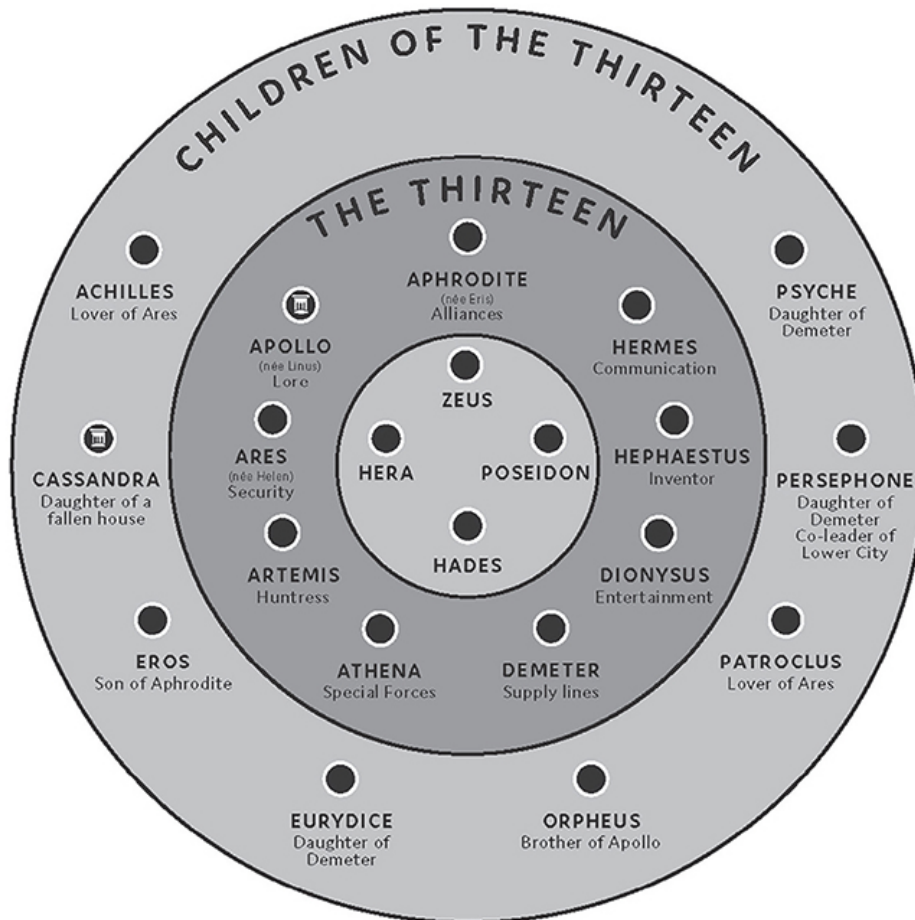
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To Tim. I love you forever and always.

THE RULING FAMILIES OF

Olympus



THE INNER CIRCLE

HADES: Leader of Lower City

HERA: (née Callisto) Spouse of ruling Zeus, protector of women

POSEIDON: Leader of Port to Outside World, Import/Export

ZEUS: (née Perseus) Leader of Upper City and the Thirteen

Olympus



1

Cassandra

I hate parties, Olympus, and politics...but not necessarily in that order.

I can avoid two out of the three on good days, but today is promising to be anything but. It started this morning when I spilled my coffee all over Apollo's shirt. A rookie mistake, and one that might get me fired if my boss were anyone other than *Apollo*. He just gave a small smile, assured me it was his fault when it was clearly mine, and changed into the spare suit he kept in his office.

He should have yelled at me.

I've worked for the man for five years now, and even that isn't enough time to stop expecting the other shoe to drop. He's hardly perfect—he's one of the Thirteen who rule Olympus, after all, and there are no saints among them—but he's the best of the bunch. He's never abused his power over me, never turned his position as my boss into an excuse to be a petty tyrant, has never even raised his voice no matter how thoroughly I've fucked up from time to time.

It's maddening.

I shove my hair back, hating that I can feel sweat slicking down my back as I climb the last flight of stairs. Something is wrong with the elevator in Dodona Tower, and for reasons that seem suspect, it only goes halfway up. I glare down at the file in my hand. I *should* have just left well enough alone when I realized Apollo forgot it as he rushed out the door for his meeting with Zeus. He's an adult and is more than capable of dealing with the consequences.

But...he didn't yell at me.

No one who knows me would call me a bleeding heart—more like a coldhearted bitch—so I have absolutely no reason to have caught a cab to the

center of the upper city, taken the elevator halfway up, and then proceeded to climb the rest of the thirty floors on foot.

In six-inch heels, no less.

There's something wrong with me. There must be. Maybe I have a fever.

I press the back of my hand to my forehead and then feel extra foolish because *of course* I feel overheated. I just did more exercise than I would ever intentionally participate in unless running for my life. And even then, I'd fight before I ran.

I curse myself for the millionth time as I push through the stairwell door and out into the hallway where Zeus's office is located. Then I get a look at my reflection in the massive mirror next to the elevator. "Oh no."

My red hair has gone flat, and there's a *sweat stain* darkening the line under my breasts—which means there's an answering one down my spine. I'm practically dripping. Without thinking, I dab at my forehead and then immediately regret it when my blouse comes away with a smear of foundation. My makeup has to be melting off my face right now. I look like I got caught in a rainstorm, except it's not rain, it's sweat, and my face is the color of a tomato on top of everything else.

"Fuck this. He doesn't need the file that bad." I turn for the elevator...and then remember that to flee, I have to make the return trip down fifteen flights of stairs. My thighs shake at the thought. Or maybe they're shaking from the climb.

Does it count as a workplace accident if I fall down the stairs on an errand I technically wasn't asked to do? Apollo would probably find some way to blame himself and pay for my medical bills, but getting hurt like that means no paycheck, and no paycheck means my little sister might not have the money she needs to buy books or school supplies or all the other random shit being at university requires. I can't risk an injury, even if it means I'm humiliated in the process.

"Cassandra?"

I curse myself yet again and turn to face the gorgeous white woman walking down the hallway toward me. Ares is her name now, but it used to be Helen Kasios. I wouldn't call us friends exactly, but I've attended the parties she used to throw from time to time before she became one of the Thirteen. It always felt a bit like watching animals in a zoo as I posted up against a wall and

witnessed the powerful people from Olympus's legacy families poke and snap at one another. I've learned a lot from playing the sidelines, nearly enough to protect me and my sister from the circling wolves.

But Helen isn't too bad, honestly. She's never cruel when kindness will further her goals, and she's perfected a glittery exterior that everyone seems to think means she's empty-headed but that I've always interpreted as a warning not to get too close. No one surfs the political currents as adeptly as she does if they're not smarter than most of the people in the room.

But that was before she became Ares. Now I can't take anything for granted when it comes to her. We aren't on the same level—two women from legacy families, even if mine is disgraced and hers rules Olympus.

She's one of them now, and I'm still me.

"Helen. Or, rather, Ares." I strive to keep my tone even, but her name still comes out too sharply. "What are you doing here?"

"Meeting with my lovely brother." She shrugs. She's built slim the way her mother was, though there's clear muscle definition in the arms left bare by her black sheath dress. She looks cool and professional and untouchable, her light-brown hair perfectly done.

I feel grimy standing next to her. I haven't wanted a thin body in over a decade—I love my curves out of sheer defiance of everyone who acts like they should be part of a *before* picture—but it's hard not to compare us when we stand like this.

I ruthlessly squash the urge to shift, to conceal. There's no fixing how messy I look, and trying to do it will just telegraph how uncomfortable I am right now. I raise my chin and focus on smoothing out my expression instead. "I see."

She gives me a long look. "Apollo's in with him now. I don't think he knew you were coming, or he would have waited for you."

There's no getting out of this. I'm here. I might as well see it through. I hold up the file between us like a shield. "He forgot this."

"Ah." She glances back down the hallway. "Well, I'll walk you down there."

"That's really not necessary."

"It really is." She spins on a heel and faces the same direction as me. "With things in a bit of upheaval right now, the security is ramped up. Honestly, I'm not sure how you got up here at all. My people are supposed to have the upper floors locked down."

That explains the elevator “malfunction” and why the guy downstairs was such an asshole. I shrug a single shoulder. “I’m persuasive.”

“More like you’re terrifying.” She laughs, a sound so happy it makes my chest ping in envy. I don’t want what Ares has—the title, the power, the responsibility—but it must be nice to be so comfortable in how she moves through the world, sure that it will bend to her impressive will.

I’m not naive enough to think that everything comes as easily to her as it appears, but I’ve had to fight and claw my way through the last decade of life. People look at me and don’t automatically assume innocence. I’m painted with the same shame my parents were, even if I don’t deserve it.

Not that it matters. I don’t give a fuck what these peacocks think of me.

Not even Ares.

“Your people are specially trained,” I snap. “If they can’t take me, that sounds like a *you* problem.”

“Absolutely.” She agrees so damn easily. “By the way, is Orpheus still bothering you?”

Mention of Apollo’s brother makes me frown. What does Orpheus have to do with anything? It takes several steps for understanding to settle over me. She’s talking about that party where he was being an arrogant little prick, but that was months ago. I’m honestly surprised she remembered at all. “I can handle Orpheus.” He might be bigger than me, but he’s brittle. I could break him without lifting a finger.

“If you’re sure... I know it’s a touchy subject because he’s Apollo’s little brother.”

I snort. I can’t help it. “Apollo has more or less washed his hands of Orpheus.” As much as Apollo can wash his hands of anyone in his family. What it really translates to is that he’s stopped smoothing over Orpheus’s messes and cut off his money. With how their mother babies the spoiled brat, it never would have worked if Apollo wasn’t, well, Apollo. “When he shapes up, he can play prodigal son and get all the attention he’s deprived of right now. He has bigger things to worry about than chasing some woman who doesn’t want him.”

“If that ever changes, don’t hesitate to call me.”

“Sure,” I lie. I know better than to trust anyone in this godsforsaken city. When push comes to shove, Ares will look out for herself and her interests

before helping someone else. Expecting anything else is like expecting a fish to sprout wings and fly. "I'll do that."

"No, you won't." Ares smiles. "But the offer still stands. Here we are." She stops in front of a large dark door with Zeus's golden nameplate on it. The current Zeus is Ares's brother. The last one was her father. I'd rather chew off my own arm than deal with either of the men who've held the title during my lifetime, but I'm here. It's too late to go back now.

I do my best not to hold my breath—not with Ares watching—and knock.

Apollo's the one who opens the door, and I instinctively brace myself for a whole new reason.

I hate looking at Apollo. He's too fucking perfect, a product of his Swedish father and his Korean model of a mother. Tall, broad shoulders, perfectly trimmed black hair, and kind dark eyes. It's the latter that always hit me like a blow to the chest.

I should have quit a long time ago.

As his executive assistant, I've got my fingers in an information network that spans all of Olympus and beyond. I'm the one who compiles the reports from the various sources, complete with my thoughts, before Apollo gets them. The work is challenging, and I actually enjoy it.

Not that I'll ever admit as much out loud.

But as much as I like what I do, this attraction is getting to be too much. Better to work in an office job I loathe than to have...feelings...about my boss. Even if the feelings in question are something as simple as lust. It complicates things.

I know what happens to people who get tangled up with the Thirteen.

They die.

I shove the file at him. "You forgot this." My voice is too sharp, too bitchy. He didn't ask me to do this, but I'm embarrassed and it's so much easier to snarl and snap than admit it. "I'm not your errand girl, and now I'm in overtime for the week."

Apollo raises a single dark brow. "You didn't have to come all this way, Cassandra. I would have done without."

Without a doubt. He's capable on a truly terrifying level and has nearly perfect recall of anything he's ever read. He would have been fine relaying the

contents of the file without having it on hand. He probably only put it together for Zeus's benefit.

But he was nice to me this morning.

I am a *fool*.

"You're welcome." I turn on my heel. "See you tomorrow."

"Cassandra."

I ignore him and keep going. If security is the reason the elevators won't go above floor fifteen, then I bet they'll descend from here. They're keeping people out, not in. My exit won't be marred by having to take a breather on the stairwell and praying to the gods that no one stumbles on me. My pride won't be able to handle it.

"Cassandra." He's closer. Damn it, I should have known he wouldn't let this go.

I sigh and stop. It's beneath both our dignities to have him chase me down the hall in front of Ares.

Apollo stops next to me, his longer legs having covered the distance easily. He pauses. "Thank you for bringing this. If you'll hold on for a few minutes, I'm just wrapping up. I'll give you a ride home."

The temptation to say yes nearly makes my knees buckle. I've shared enough rides with him on the way from one meeting to another over the years. I know exactly how it will go. He'll slump back against the seat and loosen his perfect black tie. Not a lot. Just enough to drive me to distraction. Then he'll pull out his phone and leave me to my thoughts.

Apollo never prattles on the way some people do. He's not one of those strong, silent types, but he doesn't feel the need to fill quiet moments with inane chatter. The car ride will be comfortable and lovely, and I absolutely cannot say yes to it. It's one thing to have those moments during the workday when I can tell myself there's no avoiding them. After hours?

No. Absolutely not.

"I'm fine."

He searches my face as if he can tell I'm being stubborn for the sake of being stubborn, but Apollo is a man who respects boundaries so he just nods. "Keep the cab-fare receipt and expense it."

I hate how weak I get at the simple thoughtfulness he continually demonstrates. Apollo is too savvy not to know how tight money is for me—his

entire job is information, after all—and he also understands me well enough to guess I won't take charity. Not from him. Not from anyone. Not when it's never really charity and always comes with strings attached.

But a business expense?

My pride can handle that.

"Fine."

"See you tomorrow, Cassandra." The warmth in his tone almost brings me up short before I forcibly remind myself that this is just how he speaks to people. He can get tense from time to time, but Apollo really took that old saying about flies and honey to heart. Especially when it comes to me, as if he can smooth my sharp edges with pure charm.

It's nothing personal. It's certainly not *interest*.

My unfortunate attraction is one-sided and that's just fine with me.

It's only a matter of time before I get out of this cursed city once and for all. The last thing I need is to get entangled with one of the Thirteen—*another* one of the Thirteen—before I do.