

I Am Zeus

#Chapter 40: Unlikely Alliance - Read I Am Zeus

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Olympus – Midnight Courtyards

Hera stormed down the marble steps of Zeus's chambers, her sandals striking the floor so hard that small sparks of divine light flared under her heels. The torch flames along the corridor flickered and bent away from her as she passed, their golden glow revealing the hard, frozen lines of her face.

She stepped out into the wide courtyard. The air was cold here, high above the mortal world. Olive trees rustled softly in the night wind, silver leaves trembling under the quiet moon. But Hera felt none of its peace. Her chest heaved with quiet, burning rage.

How dare he.

She clenched her fists so tight her nails bit into her palms. The sting of pain grounded her fury, but only barely. Her jaw ached from how hard she was clenching her teeth. She could still see Zeus's calm, tired smile in her mind. Still hear his soft, amused voice—

"If my son is strong enough to defeat me, then perhaps he deserves Olympus more than I do."

That arrogance. That blind, foolish confidence. Even after she twisted the words of the Moirai into a dagger and plunged it into his heart... he didn't even bleed.

She turned and slammed her palm against a marble column, cracking its edge with the force. The sound echoed across the silent courtyard, startling a flock of white doves that had roosted in the temple eaves. They burst into the sky in a flurry of wings, their shadows flickering over Hera's pale, furious face.

"Stupid man," she whispered, her voice trembling with fury. "Stupid... stormborn... arrogant—"

"Well, this is new."

The deep voice rolled across the courtyard like a quiet tide. Hera froze, her shoulders stiffening, before she slowly turned.

Poseidon stood under the archway that led in from the southern halls. His sea-green hair was loose tonight, falling past his shoulders in curling waves that shimmered faintly in the moonlight. He wore only a deep blue robe tied at the waist, his trident resting casually against his shoulder. His dark eyes studied her with faint amusement.

"Hera, sister," he said, tilting his head. "What has you cracking columns before dawn?"

Hera glared at him, breathing hard. "Leave me be, Poseidon."

But he didn't move. He walked forward slowly, sandals silent against the marble, until he stood a few feet away. The scent of salt and deep ocean breeze curled off him, mixing with the cold mountain air. His gaze was calm, but there was a flicker of curiosity in it.

"Tell me," he said softly. "What did our dear brother do this time?"

Hera looked away, staring out at the endless night sky. The stars burned cold and silent above them. She swallowed, her throat tight with rage and bitter helplessness.

"He..." she began, but her voice shook. She closed her eyes, gathering herself before trying again. "He... refuses to see sense. Refuses to see me."

Poseidon frowned slightly. "What sense is this?"

Hera turned on him, her eyes burning gold in the torchlight. "He chooses Metis!" she spat, the words dripping with hatred. "That Titan-born witch. He would make her queen of Olympus. He would let her children inherit his throne."

Poseidon's face darkened. The quiet amusement vanished like a tide pulled back from jagged rocks. He stood very still for a long moment, studying his sister's trembling frame, before he spoke.

"Metis," he said softly, almost to himself. "I see."

Hera laughed, a sharp, bitter sound that echoed harshly against the columns. "Do you see, brother? Do you see how foolish he is? To let a Titan rule beside him, when we only just tore their kind from power. It's an insult. To us. To you. To me."

Poseidon was silent. The wind caught his hair, lifting it around his face like sea foam. In his eyes, shadows moved – old memories of battles against Kronos, of bleeding gods and screaming Titans buried under oceans.

Finally, he spoke.

"You're right," he said quietly. "No Titan should ever sit the throne of Olympus. Not as king. Not as queen."

Hera looked up sharply. His eyes met hers, calm and dark and steady as the ocean depths.

"I will help you," Poseidon continued. "If Metis becomes queen, then her children will be heirs. They will carry Titan blood into Olympus's throne forever. That... I cannot allow."

Hera's shoulders loosened, just slightly. For the first time that night, a flicker of relief moved across her face. She stepped closer to him, her voice low.

"Will you stand with me then, brother?" she whispered. "Will you stand with me... against her?"

Poseidon looked out at the night sky, where distant lightning flickered silently across the horizon. His grip tightened around his trident. The wind lifted his robes, revealing the carved muscles of his chest, the deep blue tattoos coiling across his collarbone like ocean currents.

"I will stand with Olympus," he said finally. "And Olympus does not need a Titan queen."

Hera's lips curved into a faint, cold smile. She reached out and placed her hand against his chest, feeling the slow, tidal power that pulsed beneath his skin.

"Thank you," she whispered. "Together... we will keep our world as it should be."

Poseidon didn't smile. He just looked down at her, his eyes dark as the deep sea, unreadable.

"Be careful, Hera," he said softly. "The sea may be deep... but the storm is endless."

Hera pulled her hand away, her smile growing sharper.

"Then we will drown the storm," she said quietly.

She turned and walked away into the shadows of the temple columns, her robes whispering softly across the marble. Poseidon watched her go, his gaze distant and cold. Thunder rumbled across the night sky once more, echoing down through Olympus's towers like the quiet warning of an unseen god.

Gaia's Cavern – The Roots of the World

Zeus moved quietly through the vast, dim cavern. The roots of the earth curled down from the ceiling like ancient pillars, glowing faintly with tired green light. Pools of silver water lay still among moss and cracked stone. The air was warm here, heavy with the scent of soil and old life.

At the centre of it all, Gaia lay against a sloped mound of earth. Her skin was grey and cracked like ancient bark. Fine green veins of light pulsed faintly beneath her surface, but her breath came slow, deep, laboured. Her eyes were half-closed, lost in dreams older than time.

Zeus approached softly, his sandals crunching against fallen bits of stone. He lowered himself to sit beside her, folding his long legs with quiet grace. For a moment, he just watched her, his golden eyes reflecting the dim glow of the roots.

Finally, he spoke, his voice gentle and rough at the same time, like distant thunder softened by clouds.

"Granny," he murmured, a faint smile touching his lips. "How are you holding up?"

Her eyelids fluttered, heavy and slow, before opening enough to look at him. Those eyes, pale green and deep as the world itself, focused on his face. She said nothing, but her lips twitched, almost into a smile.

Zeus sighed softly, rubbing the back of his neck. "I'm sorry it's been days since I came down here."

He chuckled under his breath, shaking his head. "Fought Typhon. Managed to send him crawling back to Tartarus where he belongs. But he... left me a bit broken for a while." He gestured vaguely at his chest, still faintly bandaged beneath his robes.

"I've been bedridden for days," he said, his tone light but his eyes darkening with quiet guilt. "Didn't even have the strength to come pay you a visit."

Gaia's chest rose and fell in a deep, rumbling breath that vibrated the stones around them. Her eyes softened as she studied his face – the lines of exhaustion there, the shadows beneath his eyes, the quiet storm always flickering behind his gaze.

"Storm child..." she rasped, her voice rough like shifting earth, but warm. "Always... fighting. Even when... you sit still."

Zeus smiled faintly at that. He reached out, gently laying his hand over hers. Her skin felt cold and cracked, but strong beneath the frailty.

"Yeah," he said softly. "That's me."

He fell silent, just sitting there with her, listening to the deep pulsing of the roots above them, the quiet hum of the earth's heart. The storm inside him calmed, if only for a moment, as he sat beside the mother of the world, feeling her slow, ancient warmth seep through his fingers.

He closed his eyes, leaning back against the stone beside her, letting the quiet fill him.

"Rest, granny," he murmured, his voice almost a whisper. "I'll keep fighting for a little while longer... so you don't have to."