

Lykos-Redemption

\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\Act III\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\

Ch. 2: To Vélos

Coulter DarkClaw

The morning was bright and beautiful. It was amazing for Apollo. As the god of the sun he'd never been able to watch Helios raise from the Eastern Sky. The way that he alit the sky with flaming oranges and pinks and purples. His eyes drifted across the Attican countryside as he marveled at the beautiful portrait Helios painted onto Zeus' domain.

He sat huddled in a buckskin blanket, sitting on a bench in the pavilion. For the past six months, since he'd given up his godhood and immortality, Apollo had still not been able to sleep in. Every morning he was up at sunrise. So he'd taken to watching Helios rise from the Abyss. He was so enthralled with the sunrise that he didn't notice Nyctimus approach until the young man cuddled up to his side.

"Beautiful is it not?" Nyctimus asked his husband.

"Aye. It is indeed." Apollo responded casually, continuing to stare at the rising of the sun.

Nyctimus chuckled lightly before kissing Apollo on the cheek. "You are too adorable, my love. I have been fortunate indeed to have taken your fancy."

Apollo looked down and smirked. "Oh? I am the adorable one? My love, your adorableness is the reason that I met you on that fine day, so long ago." He leaned down and kissed Nyctimus on top of the head.

"It was only a little over a year ago, Apollo." Nyk whined, making Apollo laugh heartily.

"Is the blanket warm enough, brother?" came a third voice. Nyk and Apollo turned in unison to see Melaeneus, Agape, and their son, Lukos, came from the house to the pavilion to sit alongside the two men.

"Mel, it is good to see you. Why are up so early? Did Lukos wake you again?" Nyktimus asked. The last question laced with a hint of mirth.

Mel nodded. The look in his eyes, though, told Nyctimus that it was more serious than just the child's crying keeping the alpha up at night.

Nyctimus nodded subtly to Melaeneus and then, "Apollo, dear, would you care to take Agape and Lukos inside. I think the air a bit brisk for the child, do you not?" Nyk asked, putting enough of a hint into the words that his husband would take the bait.

Apollo turned and looked Nyctimus in the eyes, immediately understanding the true intent of his words. "Of course, love. I will take them indoors."

"Oh no! No you will not, Apollo! I know what is going on, and I wish to stay with my mate. I apologize, dear Shepherd, but he is my mate. I will know what it is that he is going through." Agape rose, her eyes glowing gold for a few seconds.

Apollo stood up, going over to her. He put his hand on her shoulder, and looked her in the eyes. His look, the insistence contained within it, finally persuaded her to go. "I will not let you live this down, Mel. I will know what it is that you and your brother have discussed," she growled.

"Of course, my love. This is something you will know of soon. I just wish to talk to the Great Shepherd alone."

Apollo led the two werewolves indoors. As he did, he gave Nyctimus a stern look. Nyk knew the look. He knew it too well. It said, "*We will talk about this later.*" "*I will know of this.*" and "*You'll tell me everything*" all rolled into one look that gave the gorgeous god a rather frightening visage. Nyk turned back to Melaeneus as soon as Agape and Lucos had been lead inside. "I take it that there is something that you wish to tell me?"

"Yes, there is," Mel sighed, staring into his human-formed, palm-up hands, "I... I talked to Father."

Nyctimus balked at the words. Their father was in the furthest pits of Hades. He was long dead. How could his brother have spoken to their deceased father? "H...How? Mel, h...He is dead!"

"Morpheus did this as a favor to Hades. I don't know why the god would owe anything to that swine, but apparently he did. I still am a little shocked myself, but Father has done well for himself in Hades. Even if he is not in Elysium, the swamp that is our family's plot in Hades is not so much of a decrepit hunk of land, anymore. He says that he is proud of you, brother. He knew that one day you would come into some power of your own. He is proud of us. Proud of us that we have done enough to redeem the family name in some sense in this town. He is proud of me."

Here Mel started sniffing, "That bastard! Why now? Why after almost twelve years without contact, does he decide now is the perfect time to torment *me* with a visitation from that lowlife scoundrel of a man whom we used to call 'Father'?"

Nyk put his hand on Mel's shoulder comfortably as his brother let his emotions out in full. Mel wasn't alone in this, as Nyk allowed some tears to stream down his face. Though his father was a cruel man, though he'd tried to kill Nyctimus, Nyk couldn't help but feel an almost overwhelming sense of grief. His father had found some modicum of happiness in his little section of Hades.

"I...Is there anything else? Did he have anything else to say?" Nyk asked. He wanted to know, was his father sorry for his actions. Did his father see the fault in his ways? Was he reaching out for another reason?

"H...He said...He said that he would not apologize for his actions. Not because he is not sorry for what he did b...But because he wa...Wants to forget the p...past. He is paying for his past misdeeds in his little section of Hades—our little section. He wants to move forward and just be the proud father he always should have been."

Nyctimus just nodded his head vigorously. He didn't need to reply. That was probably the best apology his father could have given him. "Thank you, Lycaon. Thank you...Father." Nyctimus muttered.

Apollo sat drinking tea. Waiting in Nyctimus' room. Awaiting his spouse and awaiting his account of the conversation. He sat looking at the bed, the straw and burlap mattress that he'd been sleeping on in no

small amount of discomfort since coming down to reside with the mortals. He wanted to transfigure it into something a bit more fitting of his stature as a g—wait he was no longer a god. He kept forgetting that. He was mortal. He wasn't human but he wasn't a god. And he wasn't a demigod either. There wasn't a word that would have been an apt descriptor of his new stature in life. He would just call himself Shepherd, for now.

He sighed. He'd always had a mind for philosophical strains of thought, but he *was* supposed to be the god of prophecy, music, poetry, and art; the sun, light, and medicine. The role that he despised more than all of his others was as the god of plague. The one that rarely got to be explored because of his half-sister, Athena was as the god of knowledge. Athena took over that role when she popped from Zeus' skull. The migraine she was, was always a nuisance to Apollo. However much he'd hated Artemis at times, he couldn't help it if he hated Athena just a bit more. That was siblinghood, though. You hated your siblings on most days, but when they needed you, when you needed them, they'd be there for you. Or, at least, that's how a normal family worked. Just looking at his paternal uncles' and their relationship with his father was telling of how screwed his family really was. His step-mother was his paternal *aunt*!

Apollo found himself a quill, an inkwell and a piece of parchment. He dipped the quill into the inkwell and then graced the page with its presence. One thing that he'd kept from his time as a god was his ability with words. Specifically with poems. The problem was that the only muses that came to him anymore were heavily bribed by Eros—possibly Aphrodite. Every poem he wrote was magically turned into a love poem. No matter how hard he tried to write something graceful and elegant that told the tale of the life of the hero, Perseus, it only ever came out as some little trifle of a love poem.

He loved Nyctimus, yes. That was never any doubt, but his Great Uncle was a giant prick. He continuously screwed with his life. With his work. With everything. "By the Twelve! Eros, Uncle, we must speak! I am getting slightly annoyed by this game you are playing."

"A little more than slightly, would you not say, Polli, boy. I do not think you understand how much I disapprove of your actions, Apollo. You have no right to just leave the Council of Twelve. Who will take your place, Apollo? Zeus most certainly will not allow Helios into the Council. He is a Titan! By all that is decent in the world, Apollo, why would you leave godhood behind?"

"As love should be, so it is in the relationship *you* started between me and Nyctimus, Uncle. I loved him more than I ever loved Olympus. I guess you did not know the strength of the arrow you shot through that poor mortal's soul. You are a god, Lord Eros, but you are not infallible. You gave our arrow more strength than you should have used. So...In a sense..." Apollo trailed off. The implication of what he had said was obvious enough.

Eros balked, "I will not be blamed for *doing my job*. Apollo, you are the one who has always had a little bit of a rebellious nature. But this? This act of utter heretical lunacy that you are currently displaying, I cannot permit it to continue—"

At that moment Nyctimus came into the room, tear streaks readily apparent on his cheeks, an almost hollow look in his eyes, he shambled into the room and headed straight for the bed. He just let himself fall. Fall into the bed and almost as soon as he fell into the mattress Nyctimus was crying.

Apollo went to him immediately. Shushing him and rubbing his back, he silently glared at Eros. Eros harrumphed and left in a cloud of his usual red smoke. Apollo looked down at his now-sobbing love and asked, "What was it, Love? Is everything alright?"

Melaeneus went to his mate and their son. He was somehow exhausted. **Why'd that take so much out of me?** He thought to himself. "Love, there is something about which we need to speak." Melaeneus said in a diplomatic tone of voice, "Leave Lucos with...Harpalykos? Yes. He will take care of Lucos."

Harpalykos glared at his brother quietly before accepting the swaddled eight-month-old. He would hear of this later, he assumed. He took his mate out to the pavilion, again.

"My dear, you have been crying. What is it, my love, my Alpha?" Agape said to her loved one.

Melaeneus looked to her and then to his hands, this time clenched in fists, as he stated, "Father spoke to me in a dream last night."

"Mel! By Ares, I am sorry! How are you doing with that? It could not have been an easy conversation. Was it?"

"N...No." Mel muttered. He had gone extremely quiet. Agape hugged her mate intensely. She showed that she held Melaeneus in the highest state of love. The form after which she'd been named. She swaddled him deeply in her arms. Stroking the back of his neck as finally the alpha broke down completely, bawling into his mate's shoulder as she bathed him in her love.

"Like Hades! You had a choice, Morpheus. What are you doing messing with my brother-in-law like this?" Apollo raged. Nyctimus huddled himself in a corner of the room. He wasn't afraid of his husband, nor should he have been, it had just grown intensely hot near the ex-sun god. His temper was flared in an extreme and Nyctimus felt like he would be baked alive in this room if the god of dreams didn't do something to make Apollo calm down.

"L...Lord Apollo, please. You know your uncle. He is not a man with whom one can argue. He would eliminate me. I would rather do this than face Hades' wrath."

Apollo sighed, "Get out."

The other god left, somehow cowed, by the anger that Nyctimus rarely saw from his husband. Though, he wasn't that surprised, if he was being honest with himself. Apollo's pyrokinesis gave him a fairly fiery temper.

When the temperature in the room began to cool to a degree that it caused Nyctimus just the smallest modicum of discomfort, he approached his husband. He hugged him deeply, "Thank you, but do not do that again. I thought I was going to be cooked alive, Apollo. Please, control your temper."

"I..." Apollo said defensively, tensing. He then, sighed, "I apologize, love. I still do not quite have control over these abilities that I have. When I was a god, the pyrokinesis and its anger were always just a part of the job. It helped me to control Helios. Now it is just a nuisance, a danger to my family. I am sorry. I truly wish that this was not one of the powers I had kept."

Demeas couldn't believe what he'd just dreamt. That was his father. He was as okay as one could be in Hades and not be in Elysium. He was angry. At him. "What. In. Hades." He mumbled angrily at himself, "I thought you would be proud, Father. Why are you angry with me? It's that blubbering faggot, Nyctimus' fault that I'm on this path."

He walked over and looked at the map of Attica he'd splayed out. He had mapped out several plans of attack, trying to overwhelm his family. He was determined to make Nyctimus realize the error in making that oath. Swearing on the River Styx, what had he been thinking? He wasn't, Demi was sure. But there was naught he could do about it now. His path had been set. Nyctimus would die protecting that spineless lout that was Melaeneus. At least that is what he planned to happen. He laughed nervously as he sniffed back a tear.