

## The Road to Hellas

### Part Five

by  
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"A hydra!" Kara exclaimed desperately trying to remember the two weeks in high school that they read Greek mythology. Kara's eyes were focused on the fight below. The young man with the sword dance lightly out of the way of the two huge snake like heads. His movements were poetry and his sword a shaft of living silver. It gleamed in the sunlight as it sliced through one of the hydra's necks as if it were butter. The head was almost completely severed and the neck writhed and twitched with such force that the head was quickly thrown off. Kara looked on in horror as the headless neck continued to move and then split right down the middle and right before her eyes two more heads emerged from the stumps. The hydra now had three heads instead of the original two. "Lucas, how do you kill that thing?" "Fire," he said calmly. "In the myths when a head was cut off the wound had to be cauterized instantly." "Cauterized eh," said Kara with a triumphant smile. "My thoughts exactly Kara. I'll get the young hero out of danger and you deal with the heads." Kara nodded just as Lucas' legs and butt flexed and he moved into a power dive. She followed him more slowly waiting for her opportunity to strike. Like a shooting star Lucas fell from the sky. The young hero was in bad shape. Two more heads had fallen and now he face a hydra with five heads. The largest head dove like a striking cobra but just before it hit Lucas was there. He scooped the young man up and flew out of reach in a blink of an eye. Now, Kara could act. Kara hover seventy five feet over the hydra and her eyes closed partially as she narrowed her heat vision beams to laser fineness. Unholy screams sounded the death knell for the hydra as its heads were sliced away by the beams of intense heat from Kara amazing eyes. Once the last head had been sliced away Kara completed the job and incinerated the carcass. Lucas was waiting on a narrow mountain track for Kara to land. She could see no sign of the would-be hero as she touched down next to him. "Where's the guy with the sword?" "Back down the mountain ranting. He didn't quite understand that we just saved his life. He was most upset that his opportunity for glory had been taken away from him. The words he used were really quite graphic and I don't think he would have stopped in the presence of a lady. The one thing I cannot stand is ingratitude." "So you just took him back down," said Kara knowing that Lucas had left something out. "Well I did sort of hang him upside down in the tallest tree I could find. He's not in any real danger but when the villagers find him it should cause a few laughs." Kara chuckled at the young man's predicament and could not resist taking a little peek. Sure enough the would-be hero was hanging from the branches of a large olive tree flapping in the wind his tunic covering his embarrassed face. Kara allowed herself a moment to enjoy the sight and then took Lucas' hand and started up the mountain. The shrine was quite small, just a small circular limestone building surrounded by marble columns. A small middle-aged woman dressed in a flowing green robe was waiting for them just outside the shrine. As they approached she bowed low to them and only rose when they stopped in front of her. "Thank you," she said. "That monster has plagued the mountain for three years and prevented pilgrims from journeying to the shrine of the earth mother." "Your welcome," said Kara. "I'm just glad that we could be of assistance." "If there is anything that a humble priestess of Demeter can do, you have but to ask." "Actually there is," said Lucas. "My name is Lucas and this is Kara. I believe that you were expecting us." The priestess' eyes widened in shock as she looked upon the man and woman she was sure were demi-gods. She bowed once more. "Yes," she said her voice filled with awe, "Demeter spoke to me in a vision last night and told me that you would come. Please follow me." She turned and motioned them both into the shrine. The only object in the shrine was a bronze statue of a beautiful and matronly woman holding a baby. The statue was surrounded by fresh flowers and baskets of fresh fruit and vegetables. At the base of the statue was a small silver box two inches square and seven inches long. The priestess knelt and reverently took up the box. "I am sorry noble sir but this may only be carried by a woman," she said handing the silver box to Kara. "To do anything else would taint the gift."

"I understand," said Lucas.

"May I look?" asked Kara.

"It is permitted but you may not touch." "I won't," said Kara opening the box. The inside of the box was lined with snow white silk and resting on the silk was a single red rose. Kara had never seen a rose of such a deep red. A single drop of dew hung motionless from petal as if it were cut just seconds ago. When she opened the box the shrine filled with the loveliest fragrance Kara had ever smelled. It was as if spring had come to the shrine with all its promise of life and rebirth and just breathing the heady scent was enough to lift her spirits. Regretfully Kara closed the box and placed it in a small leather sack that she hung from around her neck. The priestess handed something to Lucas and then he said that it was time for them to leave. The priestess watched in awe as Kara and Lucas leapt into the air and flew off to the south.

"So where to now?" asked Kara.

"To see Hades like I told you before."

"And where is that exactly?"

"Sorry, I thought you knew. Hades is Zeus' brother and lord of the underworld." "The underworld? As in where souls go when they die."

"That's the one"

"Oh boy."

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Gaining entrance to the underworld was easier than Lucas thought it would have been. Cerberus, the three headed watch dog, leapt out at them barking loud enough to wake the dead but Kara had dealt with him surprising ease. She whistled a high pitched whistle that only dogs or someone with Lucas extraordinary senses could hear. He was quickly forced to tell his ears to shut off but Cerberus had no such option. The gigantic three headed dog with his six ears crawled upon the dirt floor and rubbed his pained ears into the ground. Kara kept on whistling until the watch dog was whimpering in pain and then stopped. The change this created in Cerberus was remarkable. The three headed dog fawned and licked Kara with all its long and incredibly wet tongues and wagged its long whip like tail in joy. "Sit," Kara said scratching Cerberus behind the ears. Obediently Cerberus flopped down and rolled its eyes and all three tongues panted in happiness. Kara continued to scratch with nearly all her Velorian might and Cerberus loved it. "Well," said Lucas the admiration clear in his voice, "that's something that I'd never thought I'd see. How did you do it?" "When I was growing up our neighbors had a Doberman pincher. The whistling worked on him and I thought it might work on this puppy here." "Well Kara say goodbye to your new friend. We have to get going." If not for the heavy chain that held all three of its heads Cerberus would have followed Kara down into the tunnel it was supposed to be guarding. They heard the whining of the three headed watch dog for a long time afterward and Kara regretted having to leave him chained like that. They jogged down the darkened tunnel their enhanced vision ensuring that they never put a foot wrong. The tunnel ended at the banks to the river Styx. Against the shore was a long shallow bottomed boat with a black robed man holding a long poll standing in the boat. Before they stepped up to the ferry and Charon the ferryman of the dead Lucas pulled Kara aside and showed her the two gold coins in his hand. "What the hell are those for?" she asked looking with disgust at the gold in his hand. "They're the toll for the ride across the river." "Okay let's get this over with. Give me the coin so I can hand it to him." "Sorry Kara it doesn't work that way. You have to put the coin under your tongue."

"Are you kidding?"

"Sorry."

"Alright let's get it over with." Kara's skinned crawled the moment Lucas placed the gold coin in her hand. For a moment her body rebelled at the thought of placing the hated metal under her tongue but it was the only way. So, as they came to the boat Kara opened her mouth and before she could back down placed it under her tongue. The effects that the gold had on her were magnified the instant her tongue touched the gold. Her unearthly strength seemed to melt away and her libido kicked into over drive. It was all Kara could do to stop herself raping Lucas as he helped her into the boat. Lucas strong grip on her shoulders kept Kara's

mind on the task at hand and stopped her spitting the coin into the river. Once they were aboard Charon pushed the ferry into the river and began polling them across. Not a word was spoken by the creepy ferryman and Kara was glad. She was not even tempted to use her Tachyon vision on the ferryman. When they crossed the half way point the coin vanished from her mouth and Kara breathed a sigh of relief. Her strength was fully restored by the time she and Lucas stepped from the boat to the opposite side of the River Styx. There was another dark tunnel on the other side of the river. Kara eyes focused on the tunnel but found it difficult to see anything. It was as if there was something in or about the tunnel that didn't want her to see what was at the other end. Yet, whatever was at the other end of the tunnel she and Lucas would face it together. A hundred yards into the tunnel they began to see without the aid of their super human eyes as the tunnel walls began to glow with an eerie green light. Both Kara and Lucas found that their eyes were bothered by this light and hurried to get past it. The green light bothered them so much that they did see the trap until it was too late. A hand reached out of the tunnel wall and grabbed Kara by her long honey blond hair. She gave out a small cry and whirled on her unknown assailant. Lucas turned to help and found that half a dozen walking corpses melt from the wall between him and Kara. He attacked. Bodies rotten by years of decay flew about the tunnel. Every time he had to touch one Lucas' skin crawled but no matter how many he dealt with more kept emerging from the glowing green walls. Through the now sea of corpses he could see that Kara was holding her own. The training that she had received from him being demonstrated before his appreciative but busy eye. Lucas knew that the two of them could keep up this pace for days but suspected that Hades could do so as well and cut off from the sun they couldn't recharge their internal batteries. Finally Lucas had had enough.

**"Hades! Hades!"** he called out at the top of his inhuman lungs and the walls of the tunnel shook. Kara picked up Lucas' cry and joined in with the full power of her Velorian lungs. The shouts continued and the tunnel shook more and more violently and the corpses fell to the ground. Finally when it appeared as if the tunnel would fall down about them a man stepped from the tunnel wall. The moment that Lucas saw the pale skinned man with the dark hair and eyes dressed in the black tunic and silver robes he stopped shouting and Kara followed suit a second later.

"What goes on here?" asked Hades dismissing the corpses with a wave of a hand. "Well," said Kara a little exasperated, "it looks as if we finally got your attention." "Who are you people? You're not supposed to be here." "We've come to see you Hades," Lucas said. "We need your assistance." "My assistance and this is how you go about getting it by bring the walls down. Get you gone." "Oh well come on Kara let's go," Lucas said taking the Velorian's resisting arm and turning around. "I guess the lord of the underground doesn't want the gift we have for him." "Gift?" Hades asked before they had taken a step. "What gift? What have you brought me?" "We have brought you anything," replied Kara catching onto Lucas' plan. "We're just the messengers. But since you don't want to help, Lucas and I will be on our way." "No, stop! You don't have my leave to go." "Then you'll help us," said Kara. "What is this assistance you seek?" "We want to speak with Tiresius the Seer," said Lucas. "You ask a great deal. Even in the underworld there is nothing that the blind seer cannot foretell." "You haven't seen the gift yet," Kara said.

"Well, show it to me then."

"Can we trust him?" Kara asked Lucas. "Oh I think so. I've never heard of Hades being anything less than honorable." "Of course I am honorable! The very idea. Show me this gift if it warrants it then you shall speak with Tiresius." Kara opened the sack around her waist and handed the lord of the underworld the silver box. He took and opened it quickly but when it was open and the scent of warmth and sunshine and spring filled the tunnel tears filled his eyes and his hands began to shake. "Persephone," he cried with a wavering voice as he lifted the rose from the box and held it to his cheek. Hades stayed that way for about ten minutes before he remembered that he was not alone. Regretfully he placed the rose back in the box and closed the lid. Hades stared at the closed lid for a few seconds before turning back to Kara and Lucas. "Ask me anything and if it is in my power to grant it is yours," he said. "We just want to talk to Tiresius." "Then talk with him you shall. Come with me," Hades said turning to the wall and with a wave of his hand an opening appeared. The lord of the underworld led Kara and Lucas through a maze of corridors, tunnels and rooms. Lucas and Kara both tried to follow the path that they took but there were just too many twists and turns. Hades finally halted in a small room with a clear dark pool of water in one corner. Sitting next to the pool

was a old man with long white hair and beard dressed in grey robes. When they entered he looked up and stared at them with sightless eyes. Tiresius stared at all of them but his gaze lingered longest on Kara's breathtaking body. "Perhaps you'd better ask him," Lucas said to Kara. "Okay," she said stepping forward. A couple feet from the blind seer Tiresius held up his hand and said, "Come no further star woman lest my lust overwhelm me. Say your peace and have done." "My friend and I need your help."

"I know. Ask your question."

"Where is the key to the Amazon Gate?" Tiresius began to sway back and forth and turning his face to the heavens and said, "North in the land of the Scythians. North beyond the breeding grounds of the dragons. North in the land of eternal mist lies the Valley of the Snake. In the snake's belly you shall find what you seek. But beware for others seek the key as well and evil is their intention. Go carefully but go quickly or all shall be lost to you." When he was done speaking Tiresius turned away from Kara and back to his pool. Kara went and rejoined Lucas and Hades. Although she had heard the blind seer's statement she did not fully understand it. She looked at Lucas for reassurance and when she saw that he was smiling she felt better. "You have the information you seek," Hades said. "You may now leave my realm." "Yes," said Lucas, "but you heard Tiresius. We have to hurry. Can you show us the fastest way out of here." "Done," said the lord of the underworld and looked at the ceiling. It opened silently and long tunnel appeared and at the other end Kara could clearly see daylight. As one Kara and Lucas flew from the room into the tunnel the legs and asses flexed to pour on the speed. The two accelerated through the entire length of the tunnel and in less than a minute burst through into the sunshine. Lucas pointed to the north and the two of them flew off together. (To Be Concluded . . .)

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