



RICK RIORDAN

Percy Jackson  
&  
THE LAST  
OLYMPIAN

*Chapter 19*

BY

RICK RIORDAN

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# 19

## WE TRASH THE ETERNAL CITY

The bridge to Olympus was dissolving. We stepped out of the elevator onto the white marble walkway, and immediately cracks appeared at our feet.

“Jump!” Grover said, which was easy for him since he’s part mountain goat.

He sprang to the next slab of stone while ours tilted sickeningly.

“Gods, I hate heights!” Thalia yelled as she and I leaped. But Annabeth was in no shape for jumping.

She stumbled and yelled, “Percy!”

I caught her hand as the pavement fell, crumbling into dust. For a second I thought she was going to pull us both over. Her feet dangled in the open air. Her hand started to slip until I was hold-

ing her only by her fingers. Then Grover and Thalia grabbed my legs, and I found extra strength. Annabeth was not going to fall.

I pulled her up and we lay trembling on the pavement. I didn't realize we had our arms around each other until she suddenly tensed.

"Um, thanks," she muttered.

I tried to say Don't mention it, but it came out as, "Uh duh."

"Keep moving!" Grover tugged my shoulder. We untangled ourselves and sprinted across the sky bridge as more stones disintegrated and fell into oblivion. We made it to the edge of the mountain just as the final section collapsed.

Annabeth looked back at the elevator, which was now completely out of reach—a polished set of metal doors hanging in space, attached to nothing, six hundred stories above Manhattan.

"We're marooned," she said. "On our own."

"Blah-ha-ha!" Grover said. "The connection between Olympus and America is dissolving. If it fails—"

"The gods won't move on to another country this time," Thalia said. "This will be the end of Olympus. The final end."

We ran through streets. Mansions were burning. Statues had been hacked down. Trees in the parks were blasted to splinters. It looked like someone had attacked the city with a giant Weedwacker.

"Kronos's scythe," I said.

We followed the winding path toward the palace of the gods. I didn't remember the road being so long. Maybe Kronos was mak-

ing time go slower, or maybe it was just dread slowing me down. The whole mountaintop was in ruins—so many beautiful buildings and gardens gone.

A few minor gods and nature spirits had tried to stop Kronos. What remained of them was strewn about the road: shattered armor, ripped clothing, swords and spears broken in half.

Somewhere ahead of us, Kronos's voice roared: "Brick by brick! That was my promise. Tear it down BRICK BY BRICK!"

A white marble temple with a gold dome suddenly exploded. The dome shot up like the lid of a teapot and shattered into a billion pieces, raining rubble over the city.

"That was a shrine to Artemis," Thalia grumbled. "He'll pay for that."

We were running under the marble archway with the huge statues of Zeus and Hera when the entire mountain groaned, rocking sideways like a boat in a storm.

"Look out!" Grover yelled. The archway crumbled. I looked up in time to see a twenty-ton scowling Hera topple over on us. Annabeth and I would've been flattened, but Thalia shoved us from behind and we landed just out of danger.

"Thalia!" Grover cried.

When the dust cleared and the mountain stopped rocking, we found her still alive, but her legs were pinned under the statue.

We tried desperately to move it, but it would've taken several Cyclopes. When we tried to pull Thalia out from under it, she yelled in pain.

"I survive all those battles," she growled, "and I get defeated by a stupid chunk of rock!"

"It's Hera," Annabeth said in outrage. "She's had it in for me all year. Her statue would've killed me if you hadn't pushed us away."

Thalia grimaced. "Well, don't just stand there! I'll be fine. Go!"

We didn't want to leave her, but I could hear Kronos laughing as he approached the hall of the gods. More buildings exploded.

"We'll be back," I promised.

"I'm not going anywhere," Thalia groaned.

A fireball erupted on the side of the mountain, right near the gates of the palace.

"We've got to run," I said.

"I don't suppose you mean away," Grover murmured hopefully.

I sprinted toward the palace, Annabeth right behind me.

"I was afraid of that," Grover sighed, and clip-clopped after us.

The doors of the palace were big enough to steer a cruise ship through, but they'd been ripped off their hinges and smashed like they weighed nothing. We had to climb over a huge pile of broken stone and twisted metal to get inside.

Kronos stood in the middle of the throne room, his arms wide, staring at the starry ceiling as if taking it all in. His laughter echoed even louder than it had from the pit of Tartarus.

"Finally!" he bellowed. "The Olympian Council—so proud and mighty. Which seat of power shall I destroy first?"

Ethan Nakamura stood to one side, trying to stay out of the way of his master's scythe. The hearth was almost dead, just a few coals glowing deep in the ashes. Hestia was nowhere to be seen. Neither was Rachel. I hoped she was okay, but I'd seen so much destruction I was afraid to think about it. The Ophiotaurus swam in his water sphere in the far corner of the room, wisely not making a sound, but it wouldn't be long before Kronos noticed him.

Annabeth, Grover, and I stepped forward into the torchlight. Ethan saw us first.

"My lord," he warned.

Kronos turned and smiled through Luke's face. Except for the golden eyes, he looked just the same as he had four years ago when he'd welcomed me into the Hermes cabin. Annabeth made a painful sound in the back of her throat, like someone had just sucker punched her.

"Shall I destroy you first, Jackson?" Kronos asked. "Is that the choice you will make—to fight me and die instead of bowing down? Prophecies never end well, you know."

"Luke would fight with a sword," I said. "But I suppose you don't have his skill."

Kronos sneered. His scythe began to change, until he held Luke's old weapon, Backbiter, with its half-steel, half-Celestial bronze blade.

Next to me, Annabeth gasped like she'd suddenly had an idea. "Percy, the blade!" She unsheathed her knife. "The hero's soul, cursed blade shall reap."

I didn't understand why she was reminding me of that prophecy line right now. It wasn't exactly a morale booster, but before I could say anything, Kronos raised his sword.

“Wait!” Annabeth yelled.

Kronos came at me like a whirlwind.

My instincts took over. I dodged and slashed and rolled, but I felt like I was fighting a hundred swordsmen. Ethan ducked to one side, trying to get behind me until Annabeth intercepted him. They started to fight, but I couldn’t focus on how she was doing. I was vaguely aware of Grover playing his reed pipes. The sound filled me with warmth and courage—thoughts of sunlight and a blue sky and a calm meadow, somewhere far away from the war.

Kronos backed me up against the throne of Hephaestus—a huge mechanical La-Z-Boy type thing covered with bronze and silver gears. Kronos slashed, and I managed to jump straight up onto the seat. The throne whirred and hummed with secret mechanisms. Defense mode, it warned. Defense mode.

That couldn’t be good. I jumped straight over Kronos’s head as the throne shot tendrils of electricity in all directions. One hit Kronos in the face, arcing down his body and up his sword.

“ARG!” He crumpled to his knees and dropped Backbiter.

Annabeth saw her chance. She kicked Ethan out of the way and charged Kronos. “Luke, listen!”

I wanted to shout at her, to tell her she was crazy for trying to reason with Kronos, but there was no time. Kronos flicked his hand. Annabeth flew backward, slamming into the throne of her mother and crumpling to the floor.

“Annabeth!” I screamed.

Ethan Nakamura got to his feet. He now stood between Annabeth and me. I couldn’t fight him without turning my back on Kronos.

Grover’s music took on a more urgent tune. He moved toward Annabeth, but he couldn’t go any faster and keep up the song. Grass grew on the floor of the throne room. Tiny roots crept up between the cracks of the marble stones.

Kronos rose to one knee. His hair smoldered. His face was covered with electrical burns. He reached for his sword, but this time it didn’t fly into his hands.

“Nakamura!” he groaned. “Time to prove yourself. You know Jackson’s secret weakness. Kill him, and you will have rewards beyond measure.”

Ethan’s eyes dropped to my midsection, and I was sure that he knew. Even if he couldn’t kill me himself, all he had to do was tell Kronos. There was no way I could defend myself forever.

“Look around you, Ethan,” I said. “The end of the world. Is this the reward you want? Do you really want everything destroyed—the good with the bad? Everything?”

Grover was almost to Annabeth now. The grass thickened on the floor. The roots were almost a foot long, like a stubble of whiskers.

“There is no throne to Nemesis,” Ethan muttered. “No throne to my mother.”

“That’s right!” Kronos tried to get up, but stumbled. Above his left ear, a patch of blond hair still smoldered. “Strike them down! They deserve to suffer.”

“You said your mom is the goddess of balance,” I reminded him. “The minor gods deserve better, Ethan, but total destruction isn’t balance. Kronos doesn’t build. He only destroys.”

Ethan looked at the sizzling throne of Hephaestus. Grover's music kept playing, and Ethan swayed to it, as if the song were filling him with nostalgia—a wish to see a beautiful day, to be anywhere but here. His good eye blinked.

Then he charged ... but not at me.

While Kronos was still on his knees, Ethan brought down his sword on the Titan lord's neck. It should have killed him instantly, but the blade shattered. Ethan fell back, grasping his stomach. A shard of his own blade had ricocheted and pierced his armor.

Kronos rose unsteadily, towering over his servant. "Treason," he snarled.

Grover's music kept playing, and grass grew around Ethan's body. Ethan stared at me, his face tight with pain.

"Deserve better," he gasped. "If they just ... had thrones—"

Kronos stomped his foot, and the floor ruptured around Ethan Nakamura. The son of Nemesis fell through a fissure that went straight through the heart of the mountain—straight into open air.

"So much for him." Kronos picked up his sword. "And now for the rest of you."

My only thought was to keep him away from Annabeth.

Grover was at her side now. He'd stopped playing and was feeding her ambrosia.

Everywhere Kronos stepped, the roots wrapped around his feet, but Grover had stopped his magic too early. The roots weren't thick or strong enough to do much more than annoy the Titan.

We fought through the hearth, kicking up coals and sparks. Kronos slashed an armrest off the throne of Ares, which was okay by me, but then he backed me up to my dad's throne.

"Oh, yes," Kronos said. "This one will make fine kindling for my new hearth!"

Our blades clashed in a shower of sparks. He was stronger than me, but for the moment I felt the power of the ocean in my arms. I pushed him back and struck again—slashing Riptide across his breastplate so hard I cut a gash in the Celestial bronze.

He stamped his foot again and time slowed. I tried to attack but I was moving at the speed of a glacier. Kronos backed up leisurely, catching his breath. He examined the gash in his armor while I struggled forward, silently cursing him. He could take all the time-outs he wanted. He could freeze me in place at will. My only hope was that the effort was draining him. If I could wear him down ...

"It's too late, Percy Jackson," he said. "Behold."

He pointed to the hearth, and the coals glowed. A sheet of white smoke poured from the fire, forming images like an Iris-message. I saw Nico and my parents down on Fifth Avenue, fighting a hopeless battle, ringed in enemies. In the background Hades fought from his black chariot, summoning wave after wave of zombies out of the ground, but the forces of the Titan's army seemed just as endless. Meanwhile, Manhattan was being destroyed. Mortals, now fully awake, were running in terror. Cars swerved and crashed.

The scene shifted, and I saw something even more terrifying.

A column of storm was approaching the Hudson River, moving rapidly over the Jersey shore. Chariots circled it, locked in combat with the creature in the cloud.

The gods attacked. Lightning flashed. Arrows of gold and silver streaked into the cloud like rocket tracers and exploded. Slowly, the cloud ripped apart, and I saw Typhon clearly for the first time.

I knew as long as I lived (which might not be that long) I would never be able to get the image out of my mind. Typhon's head shifted constantly. Every moment he was a different monster, each more horrible than the last. Looking at his face would've driven me insane, so I focused on his body, which wasn't much better. He was humanoid, but his skin reminded me of a meat loaf sandwich that had been in someone's locker all year. He was mottled green, with blisters the size of buildings, and blackened patches from eons of being stuck under a volcano. His hands were human, but with talons like an eagle's. His legs were scaly and reptilian.

"The Olympians are giving their final effort." Kronos laughed. "How pathetic."

Zeus threw a thunderbolt from his chariot. The blast lit up the world. I could feel the shock even here on Olympus, but when the dust cleared, Typhon was still standing. He staggered a bit, with a smoking crater on top of his misshapen head, but he roared in anger and kept advancing.

My limbs began to loosen up. Kronos didn't seem to notice. His attention was focused on the fight and his final victory. If I could hold out a few more seconds, and if my dad kept his word . . .

Typhon stepped into the Hudson River and barely sank to midcalf.

Now, I thought, imploring the image in the smoke. Please, it has to happen now.

Like a miracle, a conch horn sounded from the smoky picture. The call of the ocean. The call of Poseidon.

All around Typhon, the Hudson River erupted, churning with forty-foot waves. Out of the water burst a new chariot—this one pulled by massive hippocampi, who swam in air as easily as in water. My father, glowing with a blue aura of power, rode a defiant circle around the giant's legs. Poseidon was no longer an old man. He looked like himself again—tan and strong with a black beard. As he swung his trident, the river responded, making a funnel cloud around the monster.

"No!" Kronos bellowed after a moment of stunned silence. "NO!"

"NOW, MY BRETHREN!" Poseidon's voice was so loud I wasn't sure if I was hearing it from the smoke image or from all the way across town. "STRIKE FOR OLYMPUS!"

Warriors burst out of the river, riding the waves on huge sharks and dragons and sea horses. It was a legion of Cyclopes, and leading them into battle was . . .

"Tyson!" I yelled.

I knew he couldn't hear me, but I stared at him in amazement. He'd magically grown in size. He had to be thirty feet tall, as big as any of his older cousins, and for the first time he was wearing full battle armor. Riding behind him was Briares, the Hundred-Handed One.

All the Cyclopes held huge lengths of black iron chains—big enough to anchor a battleship—with grappling hooks at the ends. They swung them like lassos and began to ensnare Typhon, throwing lines around the creature's legs and arms, using the tide to keep circling, slowly tangling him. Typhon shook and roared and yanked at the chains, pulling some of the Cyclopes off their mounts; but there were too many chains. The sheer weight of the Cyclops battalion began to weigh Typhon down. Poseidon threw



his trident and impaled the monster in the throat. Golden blood, immortal ichor, spewed from the wound, making a waterfall taller than a skyscraper. The trident flew back to Poseidon's hand.

The other gods struck with renewed force. Ares rode in and stabbed Typhon in the nose. Artemis shot the monster in the eye with a dozen silver arrows. Apollo shot a blazing volley of arrows and set the monster's loincloth on fire. And Zeus kept pounding the giant with lightning, until finally, slowly, the water rose, wrapping Typhon like a cocoon, and he began to sink under the weight of the chains. Typhon bellowed in agony, thrashing with such force that waves sloshed the Jersey shore, soaking five-story buildings and splashing over the George Washington Bridge—but down he went as my dad opened a special tunnel for him at the bottom of the river—an endless waterslide that would take him straight to Tartarus. The giant's head went under in a seething whirlpool, and he was gone.

"BAH!" Kronos screamed. He slashed his sword through the smoke, tearing the image to shreds.

"They're on their way," I said. "You've lost."

"I haven't even started."

He advanced with blinding speed. Grover—brave, stupid satyr that he was—tried to protect me, but Kronos tossed him aside like a rag doll.

I sidestepped and jabbed under Kronos's guard. It was a good trick. Unfortunately, Luke knew it. He countered the strike and disarmed me using one of the first moves he'd ever taught me. My sword skittered across the ground and fell straight into the open fissure.

"STOP!" Annabeth came from nowhere.

Kronos whirled to face her and slashed with Backbiter, but somehow Annabeth caught the strike on her dagger hilt. It was a move only the quickest and most skilled knife fighter could've managed. Don't ask me where she found the strength, but she stepped in closer for leverage, their blades crossed, and for a moment she stood face-to-face with the Titan lord, holding him at a standstill.

"Luke," she said, gritting her teeth, "I understand now. You have to trust me."

Kronos roared in outrage. "Luke Castellan is dead! His body will burn away as I assume my true form!"

I tried to move, but my body was frozen again. How could Annabeth, battered and half dead with exhaustion, have the strength to fight a Titan like Kronos?

Kronos pushed against her, trying to dislodge his blade, but she held him in check, her arms trembling as he forced his sword down toward her neck.

"Your mother," Annabeth grunted. "She saw your fate."

"Service to Kronos!" the Titan roared. "This is my fate."

"No!" Annabeth insisted. Her eyes were tearing up, but I didn't know if it was from sadness or pain. "That's not the end, Luke. The prophecy: she saw what you would do. It applies to you!"

"I will crush you, child!" Kronos bellowed.

"You won't," Annabeth said. "You promised. You're holding Kronos back even now."

"LIES!" Kronos pushed again, and this time Annabeth lost her balance. With his free hand, Kronos struck her face, and she slid backward.

I summoned all my will. I managed to rise, but it was like holding the weight of the sky again.

Kronos loomed over Annabeth, his sword raised.

Blood trickled from the corner of her mouth. She croaked, "Family, Luke. You promised."

I took a painful step forward. Grover was back on his feet, over by the throne of Hera, but he seemed to be struggling to move as well. Before either of us could get anywhere close to Annabeth, Kronos staggered.

He stared at the knife in Annabeth's hand, the blood on her face. "Promise."

Then he gasped like he couldn't get air. "Annabeth ..." But it wasn't the Titan's voice. It was Luke's. He stumbled forward like he couldn't control his own body. "You're bleeding..."

"My knife." Annabeth tried to raise her dagger, but it clattered out of her hand. Her arm was bent at a funny angle. She looked at me, imploring, "Percy, please ..."

I could move again.

I surged forward and scooped up her knife. I knocked Backbiter out of Luke's hand, and it spun into the hearth. Luke hardly paid me any attention. He stepped toward Annabeth, but I put myself between him and her.

"Don't touch her," I said.

Anger rippled across his face. Kronos's voice growled: "Jackson ..." Was it my imagination, or was his whole body glowing, turning gold?

He gasped again. Luke's voice: "He's changing. Help. He's ... he's almost ready. He won't need my body anymore. Please—"

"NO!" Kronos bellowed. He looked around for his sword, but it was in the hearth, glowing among the coals.

He stumbled toward it. I tried to stop him, but he pushed me out of the way with such force I landed next to Annabeth and cracked my head on the base of Athena's throne.

"The knife, Percy," Annabeth muttered. Her breath was shallow. "Hero ... cursed blade ..."

When my vision came back into focus, I saw Kronos grasping his sword. Then he bellowed in pain and dropped it. His hands were smoking and seared. The hearth fire had grown red-hot, like the scythe wasn't compatible with it. I saw an image of Hestia flickering in the ashes, frowning at Kronos with disapproval.

Luke turned and collapsed, clutching his ruined hands. "Please, Percy ..."

I struggled to my feet. I moved toward him with the knife. I should kill him. That was the plan.

Luke seemed to know what I was thinking. He moistened his lips. "You can't ... can't do it yourself. He'll break my control. He'll defend himself. Only my hand. I know where. I can ... can keep him controlled."

He was definitely glowing now, his skin starting to smoke.

I raised the knife to strike. Then I looked at Annabeth, at Grover cradling her in his arms, trying to shield her. And I finally understood what she'd been trying to tell me.

You are not the hero, Rachel had said. It will affect what you do.

“Please,” Luke groaned. “No time.”

If Kronos evolved into his true form, there would be no stopping him. He would make Typhon look like a playground bully.

The line from the great prophecy echoed in my head: A hero’s soul, cursed blade shall reap. My whole world tipped upside down, and I gave the knife to Luke.

Grover yelped. “Percy? Are you ... um ...”

Crazy. Insane. Off my rocker. Probably.

But I watched as Luke grasped the hilt.

I stood before him—defenseless.

He unlatched the side straps of his armor, exposing a small bit of his skin just under his left arm, a place that would be very hard to hit. With difficulty, he stabbed himself.

It wasn’t a deep cut, but Luke howled. His eyes glowed like lava. The throne room shook, throwing me off my feet. An aura of energy surrounded Luke, growing brighter and brighter. I shut my eyes and felt a force like a nuclear explosion blister my skin and crack my lips.

It was silent for a long time.

When I opened my eyes, I saw Luke sprawled at the hearth. On the floor around him was a blackened circle of ash. Kronos’s scythe had liquefied into molten metal and was trickling into the coals of the hearth, which now glowed like a blacksmith’s furnace.

Luke’s left side was bloody. His eyes were open—blue eyes, the way they used to be. His breath was a deep rattle.

“Good ... blade,” he croaked.

I knelt next to him. Annabeth limped over with Grover’s support. They both had tears in their eyes.

Luke gazed at Annabeth. “You knew. I almost killed you, but you knew ...”

“Shhh.” Her voice trembled. “You were a hero at the end, Luke. You’ll go to Elysium.”

He shook his head weakly. “Think ... rebirth. Try for three times. Isles of the Blest.”

Annabeth sniffled. “You always pushed yourself too hard.”

He held up his charred hand. Annabeth touched his fingertips.

“Did you ...” Luke coughed and his lips glistened red. “Did you love me?”

Annabeth wiped her tears away. “There was a time I thought ... well, I thought ...” She looked at me, like she was drinking in the fact that I was still here. And I realized I was doing the same thing. The world was collapsing, and the only thing that really mattered to me was that she was alive.

“You were like a brother to me, Luke,” she said softly. “But I didn’t love you.”

He nodded, as if he’d expected it. He winced in pain.

“We can get ambrosia,” Grover said. “We can—”

“Grover,” Luke gulped. “You’re the bravest satyr I ever knew. But no. There’s no healing. ...” Another cough.

He gripped my sleeve, and I could feel the heat of his skin like a fire. “Ethan. Me. All the unclaimed. Don’t let it ... Don’t let it happen again.”

## Riordan

His eyes were angry, but pleading too.

“I won’t,” I said. “I promise.”

Luke nodded, and his hand went slack.

The gods arrived a few minutes later in their full war regalia, thundering into the throne room and expecting a battle.

What they found were Annabeth, Grover, and me standing over the body of a broken half-blood, in the dim warm light of the hearth.

“Percy,” my father called, awe in his voice. “What . . . what is this?”

I turned and faced the Olympians.

“We need a shroud,” I announced, my voice cracking. “A shroud for the son of Hermes.”

Percy Jackson and the Last Olympian is a special novel to me. Not only is the Percy Jackson series one of my favorite series by Rick Riordan, but it also helped me get through a challenging time while in quarantine this past year. I often tend to read mysteries or fantasy novels more because they bend the rules of reality. I like to really feel like I'm in a different world while reading and this book does just that. The style of writing in this book is also really engaging and I felt every emotion while reading, as if I were a character in the story. In addition, I find Greek and Roman mythology fascinating even though I do not believe in it. I started reading this series when I was younger, so this book always gives me a warm sense of nostalgia whenever I come back to it. Each character demonstrates a high level of strength and hope that I truly admire. I chose to work with one of the last few chapters of the novel for my print specifically because I really appreciate a happy ending after hardship, and I hope that my life story will also find a similar, happy ending.

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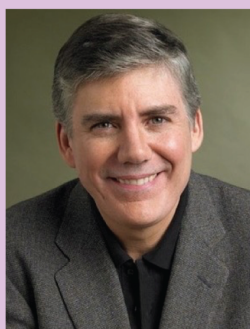
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# A PROPHECY

THE LAST OLYMPIAN REVOLVES AROUND THE DEMIGOD PERCY JACKSON AS HE LEADS HIS FRIENDS IN A LAST STAND TO PROTECT MOUNT OLYMPUS. UPON RELEASE, THE BOOK RECEIVED HIGHLY POSITIVE REVIEWS FROM VARIOUS CRITICS. IT WAS ALSO THE #1 USA TODAY BESTSELLER, THE #1 WALL STREET JOURNAL BESTSELLER, AND #1 LOS ANGELES TIMES BESTSELLER.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

RICK RIORDAN IS THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF OVER TWENTY NOVELS FOR YOUNG READERS, INCLUDING THE PERCY JACKSON SERIES, AND THE KANE CHRONICLES.

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