

THE TIDES OF CAEUS

By

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1/2 Age of Shadows set-up
Followed by "The Trials of Prometheus"

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE LADY MAJESTIC - NIGHT

Thrashing waves splash up the side of a large frigate as it cuts through the ocean en route to a shrouded island.

The black flag etched with skull-and-crossbones rages in heavy wind high above the mast and black sails.

PIRATES heave and tug ropes across the deck.

CAPTAIN URHMEIR, 45, feathered hat, vicious look, dressed in black with a sawtooth cutlass hanging by his side applies his eyes to a telescope.

O'NEIL, 34, a swashbuckler with an eye patch and mangled face spins the wheel and navigates.

URHMEIR

There be a change in the wind.

Urhmeir lowers the telescope.

URHMEIR

A skeptical night this one. Any man otherwise not me would flee these treacherous waves.

Storm clouds gather overhead.

CROW, 29, a heavy man with a broad appearance and deformed face, takes a gander from the crow's nest.

The silhouette of a GRIFFIN (half-lion/half-eagle) soars through the clouds as lightning strikes.

Crow squints at the silhouette attempting for a better look, another flash of lightning reveals the same space, vacant.

Urhmeir trots along the deck.

URHMEIR

Prepare the rowboat.

EXT. KARTOKA OCEAN - NIGHT

A rowboat SPLASHES in the raging waters.

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

An anchor CRASHES into the seabed shooting sand and seaweed upwards. A large tentacle with suckers slithers back into a crack in rock.

A great shadow grows over a pack of tuna that disperse in frantic motion.

EXT. KARTOKA OCEAN - NIGHT

Crow rows the boat away from the Lady Majestic. Urhmeir and O'Neil afford their gaze to the island cave.

Urhmeir's compass dances uncontrollably. He closes it and hooks it to his belt.

O'NEIL

There is a foul stench in the air.

URHMEIR

Aye. That be death.

Urhmeir takes a drink from a skull-flask.

O'NEIL

Forgive my intrusion, but what are we seeking?

URHMEIR

Any ever caw that it be unwise to question orders?

Urhmeir straps his flask to his belt.

URHMEIR

That mean you don't ask nor I tell.

A great and majestic shadow crawls beneath the boat. Crow looks overboard at the becalmed waters.

URHMEIR

Somethin' up yer spine?

CROW

There is something in the water.

URHMEIR

These waters are lined with souls of the downfallen. Beneath these becalmed waves there be a monster.

Crow gulps, regains the oars and rows.

O'NEIL
The Kraken?

URHMEIR
That be but a servant. All beasts
have a master. Ye would be wise to
remember that.

INT. TARO CAVE - NIGHT

A half-submerged dilapidated wooden dock sits afoot a steep slope leading up to an arching rock formation.

Crow ties the boat to the dock. Urhmeir clammers out of the boat onto dry land. He examines the place.

O'Neil strikes a match and ignites a torch.

Urhmeir studies his compass. The dial locked north-west. He CLAMPS it shut.

URHMEIR
Stay with the boat. If things go
south we be needing a quick escape.

Urhmeir grabs the torch and leads O'Neil forward.

O'NEIL (V.O.)
This place feels wrong.

INT. TARO CAVE, CATACOMBS - NIGHT

Scorpions SCUTTLE about a tattered floor in large packs. Heavy webbing blocks the way.

The torch burns through the webs as Urhmeir delves deep, noticing HUMAN SKULLS in grooves along the walls.

O'Neil studies the skulls with a nervous glance. He swipes cobwebs away from the wall and studies a cave drawing.

PEOPLE bow on the shores to a smudged GARGANTUAN FIGURE roughly the size of the EMPIRE STATE BUILDING.

Urhmeir's torch plays along the drawing.

O'NEIL
What IS that thing?

URHMEIR
Ever hear the tale of Caeus?

O'Neil shakes his head "no".

URHMEIR
That be Caeus. God o' the ocean. He
be the reason we venture here.

O'Neil tries to make out the smudged figure.

O'NEIL
It looks like a-

URHMEIR
A monster?

O'Neil nods, fear in his eyes.

URHMEIR
There be many fables throughout
this land but the legend o' Caeus
is spoken in many tongues.

Urhmeir moves along the wall, sweeps dust away revealing a
second cave drawing.

CAEUS (smudged) battles a DESTROYER (Titan) in the ocean. A
city behind them burns.

URHMEIR
A thousand years ago Caeus fought a
great Destroyer cast from stone. In
a bid te control the world.

O'Neil studies the drawing.

URHMEIR
The Destroyer, under the command o'
Erenius, aimed to decimate Caeus.

Urhmeir reveals a third drawing.

Caeus floats on his back in the ocean. The Destroyer has its
back turned and eyes on the burning city.

O'NEIL
Caeus fell.

URHMEIR
Aye -- so the tales say.

O'Neil gazes at Urhmeir who wears a smirk.

URHMEIR

Then again, I've never been one to believe in bedtime stories.

EXT. THE LADY MAJESTIC - NIGHT

Crew sweep and clean, tie ropes and perform duties.

NOLAN, 41, a hideously scarred man with a blade-contraption attached to the stub of his wrist walks the deck.

A loud SQUAWK echoes from afar.

Crew gaze to the skies and stop duties on lookout. Nolan sits a hand on the hilt of his cutlass.

NOLAN

Back to work ye wee scrubs! This ain't no time for a reprieve.

Ropes CREAK and sails FLAP.

A BODY falls from the crow's nest and CRASHES into the deck with an almighty THUD.

Crew back up and unsheathe their weapons, aiming their gaze skyward to the nest.

Nolan scours the sky for movement. Waves crash against the ship and ropes CREAK as they twist.

A GRIFFIN swoops in from the dark snatching a crew member and flying off into the distance.

Crew grow uneasy.

The griffin swoops in for another snatch-up, whisking a SCREAMING MAN off into the storm clouds.

Nolan climbs aboard the battlements gripping a rope.

Crew members scurry about on deck, some fight to get below, others raise the sails.

NOLAN

Where are ye?

JOHAN (O.S.)

Here.

Nolan YELPS as JOHAN, 25, a handsome man with a scar down his blinded right eye, clad in adventurer gear, drags him off the ship.

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Johan drags Nolan into the muggy depths. Bubbles rise as Nolan flails to struggle free.

EXT. THE LADY MAJESTIC - NIGHT

Crew gaze overboard wearing concerned expressions.

CREW MEMBER 1
Where did he go?

CREW MEMBER 2
Something snatched him.

An argument breaks out.

The griffin lands on the deck raising its majestic wings and releasing a SQUAWK.

Crew members hop overboard. Some fend it off with cutlasses. The beast snaps its beak at them.

Johan EXPLODES out of the water with his sword drawn.

The griffin snatches a cutlass from a crew-mate, who backs up in fear and jumps overboard.

Johan cuts through a sail with his sword on quick descent. He lands on the deck.

Remaining crew members tremble and stare at him.

JOHAN
Boo.

They SCREAM and leap over the side.

Johan pats the griffin's beak and gazes around the vacated ship with a grin.

JOHAN
So much for "fearsome".

INT. THE LADY MAJESTIC, CAPTAIN'S CABIN - NIGHT

A table occupied by maps and candles sits afoot a frosted window. A lantern hangs above the table.

The door BREAKS off the hinges. Johan enters with his sword drawn and eyes scanning for movement.

Johan sheathes his sword and rounds the table. He gazes at the various maps.

He traces his finger along a map to an "X" right in the center of the ocean.

ARO, 25, a charmer with neat hair and light armor, steps through the broken doorway and admires the place.

ARO
Don't pat me on the beak.

JOHAN
I thought you liked it?

Aro SNICKERS and studies the maps.

JOHAN
(taps on map)
Look. Right here.

Aro affords his gaze to the X.

ARO
There's nothing around here for miles.

JOHAN
Nothing we can see.

ARO
Really?

JOHAN
(with a smile)
Really.

EXT. THE LADY MAJESTIC - NIGHT

Aro goes to-and-fro across the deck grabbing lines and preparing the ship.

Johan waits on the upper deck with his hand on the wheel.

JOHAN
No time like the present.

ARO
Have you ever tried piloting a ship with one crew member? Perhaps we shouldn't have scared them off.

JOHAN
They'd only hold us back.

ARO
We're doing a fine job of that
ourselves, brother.

Aro stops in the middle of the deck. He closes his eyes and takes a deep, soothing breath.

A DOZEN Aro's appear all around the deck simultaneously. They perform duties, pull lines and hoist sails.

ARO
Much better.

JOHAN
Do you have to use your gift for
every little thing?

ARO
Says *Shark Boy*. What was that with
the first-mate?

Johan shrugs as Aro scales the stairs.

JOHAN
I only use it when I have to.

ARO
What about Abigail? Did you use *it*
on her?

Johan shoots him a showing look.

ARO
Course you did. Why am I asking?

JOHAN
Hey, if you wanted her you should
have acted sooner. You were like a
monkey fumbling a banana.

ARO
I was not.

Johan chuckles.

ARO
Did I miss a funny thing?

JOHAN
No. Just recalling your approach.

Aro frowns.

 ARO
How's it my fault?

 JOHAN
It is a *little* funny. Of all the men you could have turned into you somehow managed to pick a guy that had a stutter and a lisp.

 ARO
Can we focus on the task at hand?

Aro folds his arms and looks away.

 ARO
It's not like the world is at stake right now.

 JOHAN
 (with a lisp)
Sowwy.

Aro shakes his head.

 ARO
 (under his breath)
Dick.

Sails roll down and FLAP in the breeze.

 JOHAN
Okay, here we go.

 ARO
You ever driven a ship before?

 JOHAN
No, but the plan is to crash into something anyway.

All the other Aro's disappear.

Aro braces himself as Johan steers the boat, following the map coordinates.

EXT. KARTOKA OCEAN - NIGHT

The Lady Majestic cuts through the waves. Spirals of water (tornadoes) whirl in the background.

A large 100-foot wave approaches from the starboard side.

ARO (O.S.)
Err... Johan.

JOHAN (O.S.)
I see it. Brace yourself.

EXT. THE LADY MAJESTIC - NIGHT

Aro closes his eyes and transforms into the griffin. The griffin takes off into the sky.

Johan manages a chuckle.

JOHAN
Coward!

EXT. KARTOKA OCEAN - NIGHT

The ship CRASHES into an invisible thing that completely decimates the front.

The shrouded island appears spectacularly.

EXT. THE LADY MAJESTIC - NIGHT

Johan stands in awe at the island. He looks starboard at the oncoming tsunami.

JOHAN
I could use a ride!

EXT. KARTOKA OCEAN - NIGHT

The wave reaches the ship --

The griffin plucks Johan from the ship as waves overlap and consume the Lady Majestic, rocking it onto its side.

Johan climbs onto the griffin's back. Reins appear. He grips them tightly.

ARO (V.O.)
Don't you-

Johan SNAPS the rains.

ARO (V.O.)
Ow -- do I look like a horse?

JOHAN
Take us in.

ARO (V.O.)
I know what I'm doing.

INT. TARO CAVE - NIGHT

Crow chips his nails with a dagger on the dock. SQUAWK. He turns his gaze. WHACK. The Griffin's wing clobbers him.

Johan hops off. The Griffin transforms into Aro and both men look down at the unconscious Crow.

JOHAN
I think he's dead.

Aro nudges Crow with his boot. The tubby man GRUMBLES.

ARO
He's alive. Though-
(studies Crow's tub)
-if he continues to chow down on
ribs he might not live another day.

Johan heads up the slope.

Aro examines the becalmed water with a cautious eye. The surface ripples under a low quake every once so often.

ARO
We're running out of time.

Aro turns, Johan is gone. He searches for the man, who is high above on the arching formation.

JOHAN
Stop dillydallying.

INT. TARO CAVE, CATACOMBS - NIGHT

Johan and Aro use footprints in the sand as directions.

JOHAN

If memory serves me correctly we
are just beneath the Foundry.

ARO

I never understood these people.

JOHAN

You barely understand yourself.

ARO

What I mean, jerk, is their wild
obsession with cryptic mazes.

They make a left at a scuffed wall.

ARO

All these tunnels-

They pass a collection of human skulls.

ARO

Their idea of decor-

Aro passes Johan. Johan drags him back and points.

ARO

Their fetish with booby traps.

A thin wire hangs over the ground leading up to a guillotine
device on the ceiling.

JOHAN

Careful where you step.

ARO

I'm beginning to wonder how they
managed to survive as long as they
did without help from the outside
world.

JOHAN

Do you want me to answer that?

Aro observes the skulls, reconsiders.

ARO

Probably not, no.

INT. TARO CAVE, TRAP MAZE - NIGHT

Narrow turns here and there with large wires barricading every available turn except for one route.

Johan and Aro study the maze from the archway.

ARO
Not much of a maze.

JOHAN
They're Nalre, remember? It's never straightforward with them.

Johan steps into the maze.

JOHAN
Wait here a second. I'll scope.

Aro leans against the wall and watches with a bemused look spread across his face.

Johan rounds a corner. More trap walls, lines of wire stretching from the foot to the tip-top. He steps on.

CRACK. WHOOSH. An axe erupts from a wall. Johan backpedals. The axe buries itself in the wall.

JOHAN
Whoa-k.

He squints and leans in for a closer look. Invisible threads to the common eye lurk in his path.

JOHAN
Great.

Aro rounds the corner.

ARO
What was that about "watch where you step"?

Aro inspects the axe in the wall. Pulls a painful face.

ARO
That would've hurt like a-

JOHAN
The whole place is set with traps.

Johan looks left -- visible lines -- looks right -- more visible lines.

JOHAN

How are we supposed to navigate
when every turn could spell death?

ARO

Well, we could -- you know. Morph.

JOHAN

I morph into fish. What am I meant
to do, flop about gasping for air?

Aro smirks and shrinks down into a tiny spider. The spider
scurries to the wall and scales, passing through the lines.

ARO (V.O.)

I'll see if there's a latch or
switch or something.

The spider melts into the shadows.

JOHAN

I'll just wait here then.

Wind WHISTLES through cracks in the walls.

JOHAN

(thinking aloud)

How did *they* get through?

CREAK. CRACK. A dozen WHOOSHING sounds hit the air, followed
by a dozen CLUNKS.

JOHAN

Aro?!

(beat)

Aro, are you alive?!?

ARO (O.S.)

Fine! Nearly took an arrow in the
knee though.

JOHAN

Can you find a switch?!

ARO (O.S.)

Gimme a sec!

Johan pulls a yo-yo from his pocket and throws it down, it
comes up, throws it down, it comes back again.

CRACK. THUD. CRASH.

The trap lines retract into the walls, which also retract
into the walls opening a clear path.

ARO (O.S.)
 AAAAHHHH!!!!

Johan races toward the scream.

JOHAN (V.O.)
 Aro!

INT. TARO CAVE, RITUAL CHAMBER - NIGHT

Porcelain statues, some broken, line the walls which boast engraved symbols and ancient scriptures.

Johan rushes in and gazes around. His face cracks into a smile on sight with --

Aro, grabbed around the neck by a statue with a sword aimed at his crotch.

ARO
 Don't just stand there. Help me.

JOHAN
 I need to take this in for a sec.

ARO
 This is not funny. The damned thing came to life. I've a sword pointed at my damned c- stop laughing!

Johan covers his mouth, SNICKERS.

JOHAN
 Sorry, it's just -- if only there was a way to cast this in time.

ARO
 Get me OUT of this thing.

JOHAN
 Turn into a spider. Worked wonders last time.

ARO
 I can't, nitwit. There's a thing in here.

Johan looks around, sees nothing but statues.

JOHAN
 I can't see anything.

ARO
Because it's invisible.

JOHAN
An *invisible thing*, huh?

Drool drips onto Johan's shoulder. A thick substance peppered with putrid vomit. He swipes it off and looks up --

A CARAKTOR, a spider-like creature spliced with a woman, ten bug-eyes and a scorpion's stinger SCUTTLES down the wall at immense speed.

JOHAN
In the name of sanity!

Caraktor hits the ground and HISSES. Its stinger whips through the air. Johan ducks and side-steps as it SLAMS into the sand.

Caraktor stalks Johan, who backs up against the wall.

JOHAN
A little HELP would be NICE!

ARO
A little TIED up at the MOMENT!

The stinger thrashes through the air. Pincers snap at Johan as he ducks, dips and dodges attacks left, right and center.

Caraktor spits a web from her mouth. It pins Johan's arm to the wall. His skin SIZZLES.

ARO
Duck!

The stinger stabs. Johan moves his head. It stabs again. He ducks, peels away at the web.

ARO
Use your sword!

JOHAN
The commentary is NOT helping!

Caraktor gets her face close and HISSES with an open mouth spewing saliva and putrid lumps in Johan's face.

Aro grimaces and shivers.

ARO
That's freaking disgusting.

Johan spits chunks of stuff from his mouth and scrunches his face in disgust.

Aro spreads his arms. The statue RATTLES. He pulls his arms in, throws them out. The porcelain CRACKS. One more time. SMASH. He struggles free.

Caraktor snaps her gaze on Aro. Her tail lashes through the air like a whip. He ducks, unsheathes his sword and cuts the stinger clean off.

Green goo erupts from the stub like a leaky faucet and sprays everywhere. Walls crumble as the goo eats them away.

ARO
Her tail's full of acid!

Caraktor writhes and wriggles. Her body twists and contorts as her tail thrashes through the air.

Aro avoids the spray as best he can en route to Johan. Aro cuts Johan free.

Caraktor's tail sends Aro gliding through the air into a nearby wall.

Johan ducks her pincer. She snaps and lunges at him with swift movement. A pincer knocks him into the wall.

Aro's clothes rip and tear. His face slides into anguish. His eyes blacken, muscles rip through cloth and sharp teeth erupt from his mouth.

ARO
(painfully)
Get. Back.

Johan rushes into cover.

Aro's transformation takes a violent turn. Bones SNAP and the spine protrudes through hairy flesh. Fingernails curl. The body expands at a geometric rate.

Caraktor backs up an inch in fear --

The transformation is complete. Aro is a WEREWOLF. It staggers a moment as it tries to find its footing. WHIMPERS.

Caraktor's pincers SNAP and lash as she stalks the beast.

Werewolf locks its eyes onto Caraktor. Pupils dilate. Irises brighten. Werewolf SNARLS and lunges.

The battle is brutal and fast.

Caraktor strikes lethally but Werewolf averts. Werewolf rips a pincer right off, green acid spews everywhere.

Werewolf hops onto Caraktor's back. Its long fingernails tear through her flesh. She unleashes an AGONIZING SCREAM.

Werewolf twists her head and slides down to the ground. Pincers wrap around his massive biceps. He GROWLS and --

Rips her head clean off causing a fountain of blood to spit into the air. The body crumbles. Werewolf ROARS.

Caraktor's body wriggles and writhes a few seconds, twists onto its back and curls up spider style.

Werewolf stares into Caraktor's lifeless eyes. He SNARLS and discards the head.

Johan emerges from cover with cautious steps.

JOHAN

Aro?

Werewolf lunges and pins Johan to the wall. Stone CRACKS.

JOHAN

Aro -- it's me -- it's Johan.

Werewolf sneers.

JOHAN

I know you're in there.

Werewolf increases his grip. Johan turns purple.

JOHAN

Aro, you're -- killing me.

Johan grabs at Werewolf's wrist, to no avail.

JOHAN

Snap out of it! Aro?!?

Johan's eyes turn black. The same transformation begins.

JOHAN

No!

Johan's eyes revert to normal. The transformation reverses.

BANG. A bullet hits Werewolf in the shoulder. Blood spits onto the wall. Werewolf GROWLS and turns his head.

Crow, smoking gun in hand, backpedals with severe regret across his face.

Werewolf releases Johan and sprints at Crow, who SCREAMS.

Johan watches. TEARING. RIPPING. SQUELCHING. SCREAMING. SNAPPING. His face falls.

Werewolf HOWLS. Around him, dismembered body parts and bloodstained walls.

JOHAN

Aro, what have you done?

Werewolf gives Johan the one-two before taking off.

JOHAN

ARO?!?

EXT. KARTOKA OCEAN - NIGHT

The Lady Majestic rocks against the island wall, waves overlapping its deck.

Storm clouds gather overhead. Furious lightning slashes through the sky and thunder ROARS.

EXT. TARO ISLAND - NIGHT

INKA, four-winged birds with four-eyes and twin heads gather near the spire-like stalagmite erected from the ground.

Werewolf emerges from the cave and ROARS. Inka scatter into the storm clouds CAWING loudly.

Werewolf examines its surroundings with a sorrowful look. Its fist CRASHES into rocks.

Slowly, the eyes fade to normal. The body shrinks and everything fits back into place.

Aro, half-naked with a torn wrap around his lower half, drops to the ground on all-fours, staring at his reflection in a puddle of water.

He swipes the puddle unsettling the water. Heavy breaths and shaky hands, he stands and studies himself.

ARO
What have I become?

THUNDER rumbles, LIGHTNING strikes and THRASHING waves gain his attention. He steps forward, eyes locked on something -- MASSIVE in the swirling, ashen clouds overhead.

Aro steps onto a precipice. He looks down at jagged rocks. Then up at the massive thing nearly consumed by clouds.

ARO
I know you, don't I?

The massive thing disappears. Aro searches for it. No luck.

ARO
You said you would guide us! You lied to us!

Thunder ROARS.

ARO
You made us. This is your doing.
You turned me into *this*.

Lightning strikes nearby. Aro flinches. Another bolt catches the stalagmite spire, which crumbles.

ARO
Why?

ORNSTEIN (O.S.)
Is there ever a reason?

Aro looks over his shoulder and frowns.

ORNSTEIN, 30 (demon), clad in thick black armor with a crowned black mask and jet black eyes stands with his gaze firmly locked on Aro.

Aro unsheathes his sword, steps down from the precipice and confronts Ornstein.

ARO
Ornstein.

ORNSTEIN
Last time you made an attempt on my life it did not end well.

ARO

Fortune favors me now. I'm stronger than I was the first time. I will not make the same mistakes twice.

Aro swings. The sword cuts through Ornstein, who wafts like smoke and remains unharmed. Aro turns his head slightly.

ORNSTEIN

Did you think I would come here? A man such as me cannot step foot on hallowed ground such as this.

Aro circles Ornstein like a vulture.

ORNSTEIN

That's why I sent another to claim my prize.

ARO

He's probably dead. I'm not alone.

Aro gets in Ornstein's face.

ARO

I ride with my brother.

ORNSTEIN

Your *brother* is the one I sent.

Realization dawns on Aro's face.

ORNSTEIN

And he is *not* your brother. Johan manipulated you. He made you think you had a place in this world, but he just wanted your power.

ARO

You're wrong.

Ornstein, arms folded behind his back, circles Aro.

ORNSTEIN

The pirate, Urhmeir, came here by order of King Atreus to destroy the amulet and rid this world of it.

Ornstein gazes up at the full moon, back to Aro.

ORNSTEIN

Your *brother* and I agreed to terms that if he slay the pirate and

(MORE)

ORNSTEIN (cont'd)
bring me the amulet, I would give
him something grand in return.

Ornstein stares down Aro.

ORNSTEIN
Immortality.

ARO
He would *never* work for you.

ORNSTEIN
Your love for him is exceptional,
so much so that it blinds you. He
sees you as nothing but a blunt
instrument. Not a *brother*.

ARO
I know what you're doing and it is
not going to work. Nothing but
poison slides off your tongue. The
day I believe a demon over my own
brother is the day I lose all that
I am. And that day is *not* today.

Aro strides to the cave.

ORNSTEIN
He *will* betray you. If you trust
him, you *will* die.

Aro stops a moment. He smirks.

ARO
If you want truth then hear this:
When I'm done here, you're next.

INT. TARO CAVE, POOLS OF ETERNITY - NIGHT

An old rickety wooden bridge leads across a ravine of razor
sharp rocks and unending darkness.

Johan steps to the edge and tests the bridge. Ropes CREAK
and wood CRACKS. He steps out.

Taking one step at a time, Johan nimbly crosses the
treacherous wood. He tests a slat, SNAP. It falls. He grabs
hold of the rope, regains balance.

Ropes unwind. Slat weakens.

One of the posts holding it in place edges out of the ground, splintering in the center.

Johan presses on. Three slats are missing in front of him. He takes a breath and leaps. The slat he lands on CREAKS.

O'Neil stands on the other side of the bridge with a cutlass in one hand and a gun in the other.

O'NEIL

I'd avert from pressing on.

O'Neil shakes the gun and raises his eyebrows.

O'NEIL

Gun. Sword. Precarious bridge. I'd rather avoid watching you splat.

JOHAN

I came for the am-

O'NEIL

Oh, we know what you came for. We know *who* you work for. That puts you in somewhat of a dire situation doesn't it, friend?

O'Neil sits his cutlass on one of the ropes.

O'NEIL

All it takes is one cut. And you go bye-bye into dark-land.

JOHAN

I don't want to fight you. I just want the amulet. Back away and I'll spare your life.

O'Neil laughs, toting the gun in hand.

O'NEIL

You're not the one playing God right now, are you? So keep that gob of yours sealed tighter than a duck's ass before you bite off more than you can chew.

O'Neil looks around.

O'NEIL

Where's the *other* one?

JOHAN
I came alone.

O'NEIL
Don't feed shark bait to a pirate.
We don't bite so easy.

Johan edges forward.

O'Neil clicks back the hammer of the gun and takes aim at Johan's head.

O'NEIL
Ah-ah, what part of stop did you
not understand?

Johan is also behind O'Neil. He leans in.

JOHAN
The part where you ordered me.

O'Neil's eyes go wide, he turns and shoots. Johan's sword erupts from his back. The bullet goes off somewhere else.

Johan twists the blade. O'Neil drops his cutlass and GASPS for air. Blood drizzles down his shirt.

JOHAN
Your mistake was your gob, *friend*.

Johan pushes O'Neil into the bridge, which collapses and plummets into the ravine, taking a SCREAMING O'Neil along.

Johan plucks the cutlass from the ground. He weighs both his sword and the cutlass, discards the sword.

ARO (V.O.)
Johan?!?

INT. TARO CAVE, RITUAL CHAMBER - NIGHT

Aro rushes into the chamber with heavy, searching eyes that sweep the room, noticing the dismembered Crow and Caraktor.

Wind hurls sand through the air from a passageway off to the right of the room.

Aro steals for it, but stops and admires the wall.

ARO
What in the-

An ancient ENGRAVED PAINTING of PEOPLE worshiping JOHAN lies on the wall.

ARO

Johan?

Aro runs his hand along the wall. He trails his hand along to another engraving.

ARO

It can't be...

Aro takes off into the passageway.

The engraved drawing beside the WORSHIPING depicts Johan morphing into a MASSIVE SHARK.

INT. TARO CAVE, THE CENTRAL CHAMBER - NIGHT

An AMULET hovers above a dusty golden pedestal on a low platform in the middle of a columned room with a convex, glass ceiling.

Urhmeir admires the amulet, which reflects in his eyes.

The amulet lets off a strange HUMMING sound and glows immensely bright, releasing an array of radiant colors that trail into smoky light.

Urhmeir reaches in. The force-field BURNS his hand. He retracts, looks. His hand boasts severe burn marks.

He removes his gun, takes aim, BANG. The bullet hits the force-field, causing it to ripple, doing no damage.

URHMEIR

What sorcery be this?

JOHAN (O.S.)

I warned you not to come here.

Urhmeir turns on the spot. Johan is nowhere. The pirate unsheathes his sawtooth cutlass.

URHMEIR

Well now, seems as if the stories be true. Where are ye?

JOHAN (O.S.)

Follow the cold chill running down your spine.

Urhmeir revolves, shoots. A bullet hits the wall. Johan is nowhere, his voice everywhere.

JOHAN (O.S.)
I'm right *here*.

Urhmeir turns again, shoots wildly. Hits nothing but air.

Johan's laugh ECHOES in the cave. Shadows play along the craggy walls ten to the dozen.

URHMEIR
Shadow games, huh? I'll play. Be promisin' ye'll be tired 'fore I.

JOHAN (O.S.)
There's only so many bullets your gun can hold.

URHMEIR
Aye, that be true. But as long as I got my sword ye be hidin', tucked away in some shadow.

Silence greets Urhmeir's ears.

URHMEIR
Ever crossed swords with a pirate? Few ever have. And those that did never lived te tell about it.

JOHAN (O.S.)
You believe yourself so righteous. Yet you are flawed. No more than a man at sea for he has no home.

Urhmeir curses under his breath.

JOHAN (O.S.)
Your family is gone. Your wife is dead. Your son despises you. Why do you live? What is the point of you?

Urhmeir scans for movement.

JOHAN (O.S.)
You betrayed everything a pirate is meant to stand for when you aligned yourself with royalty.

URHMEIR
I did what was necessary. Fer the good o' this world. Te save it from the likes o' ye.

JOHAN (O.S.)

That *is* heroic. Scum of the ocean,
risking his own pitiful existence
to save the world. I expected much
more from a man like you.

URHMEIR

Aye, that be yer mistake. Ye never
be wantin' te expect a man like me
te be anythin'.

Footsteps in the distance grow closer.

JOHAN (O.S.)

Do you want to know why you cannot
get the amulet?

Urhmeir knows Johan is coming. He wrests his hand around the
handle of the cutlass.

JOHAN (O.S.)

Because you are undeserving.

The footsteps stop. Johan is behind Urhmeir.

JOHAN

Because it belongs to *me*.

Urhmeir twists and slashes Johan across the face. He BLASTS
him in the gut with the gun, lands a punt to the face.

Johan hits the ground. Urhmeir plunges the sword. Johan
blocks and sweeps the pirate off his feet.

Both men stand and enter a standoff. Johan wipes blood from
his cheek. Urhmeir scowls. They go at one another.

The exchange is lethal and brutal. Fast and frantic.

Urhmeir swings. Johan parries, cuts Urhmeir's hand off, cuts
his leg off and watches him crumple to the ground.

Urhmeir reaches for his sword with his remaining hand. Johan
lops it off. Blood spews out.

Johan kneels beside Urhmeir.

JOHAN

You were always destined to die
here, old man.

Urhmeir defiantly spits in Johan's face.

URHMEIR

Then do it ye bastard! End my life!

JOHAN

Oh, I will. But first I want you to witness the beginning of the *end*.

Johan shifts his gaze on the amulet. He approaches it with conviction, extends his hand.

ARO (O.S.)

Back away from the amulet, *brother*.

Johan retracts his hand slightly. A smirk crosses his face.

Aro, wielding his own sword and Johan's, steps into the light of the moon.

JOHAN

This is what we came for, Aro. It is right here within our reach.

ARO

I said *back away from the amulet*.

Johan steps away from the pedestal and stares a hole through his brother.

Urhmeir looks over at Aro.

URHMEIR

(painfully)

Ye -- have te -- stop him. Do not let -- him get the -- amulet.

BANG. A bullet tears through Urhmeir's head.

Aro looks over at Johan holding the smoking gun in hand. He throws it to the ground.

ARO

So it *is* true? You're working with Ornstein? Do you forget who he is?

JOHAN

It's not what you think.

ARO

Then what is it? Because from here it sure looks like you're enjoying yourself.

Johan's eyes drift.

ARO
Look at me when I'm talking to you.

They lock eyes. Ferocity and pain present in both sets.

ARO
We once stood for something. Where
along your path did you lose who
you were?

JOHAN
There is much more at work than you
think. The sands of time continue
to pour. If we do nothing-

ARO
Brother -- this is madness! Working
with the Demon King? Planning to
end the world? Who are you?

Johan hangs his head in shame.

ARO
More importantly, *what* are you?

Aro steps forward.

ARO
I see myself as a monster but you!
You're worse.
(beat)
Abandon this madness. We can leave
right now. Go home. You can be with
Abigail. We can go back to the way
things were, forget what happened
here. Brother, I'm begging you.

Johan slowly comes around.

ARO
This is not *you*.

A tear drops from Johan's eye. Aro sits a hand on Johan's
shoulder and gets closer.

ARO
I need my brother back.

JOHAN
I'm sorry.

Johan sheds more tears. Aro comforts him.

JOHAN

I never meant for any of this.

ARO

I know. It's okay. I for-

Johan stabs Aro in the stomach with a dagger. Aro GASPS, looks down. Blood drizzles onto the blade.

Aro's head hits Johan's shoulder. Johan hugs Aro's head to his chest and shushes him.

JOHAN

Sleep now. Go to the light.

Johan drops with Aro and cradles him. Aro's eyes glaze over. His body jitters. Johan cries as he digs the dagger deeper.

Aro grips Johan's shoulder. Johan twists the dagger. Aro's grip weakens. His eyelids bat. His hand falls limp. Dead.

Johan closes Aro's eyes respectfully and approaches the pedestal. He lifts the amulet from the force-field.

Johan steps over Aro's lifeless body en route to a doorway. He looks back, lingers for a moment.

JOHAN

Forgive me, brother.

Johan leaves.

The moonlight fades over Aro's body and plunges the room into darkness.

FADE OUT.

To Be Continued in...

THE TRIALS OF PROMETHEUS