Percyve the Darkness, assess the Situation
by Xagrok

Summary

Percy angers a god. Hopefully, this won't bring a negative rebuttal after he saved them all since they should be grateful for not fading, right?

... Right?

Notes

This is set to be some time after the Battle of Olympus in a UA where Percy joined Kronos' army, a UA that I'll hopefully manage to write soon since it's been ghosting around in my head for a long time. Anyway, as such, it will differ from canon and I'll do my best to make this readable on its own without prior knowledge of this being necessary.

This is a birthday present for my dear friend, Yvie. I hope you can forgive me for being this late, but I figured the idea I had for the RPP Big Bang would be to your liking, too. As such, this will be split into chapters. I hope you'll like it.

This chapter (at least) was betaed by the amazing Malkuthe, who also helped me with working out the storyline and was there for me for hours on end. Thank you for being amazing.
Percy tapped his foot on the ground. "Just so we’re clear," he said and crossed his arms. “There’s this great, looming danger that may or may not end badly, and you can’t or won’t tell me what it does, what it is, how hard this problem will be to solve, or how long it will take.”

“Yes.”

“You’re asking me to risk my life without knowing what it’s for, because of some great, complex reason you can’t tell me about.”

“Yes.”

“And you believe that I will just do this with a smile and a bow like the obedient pawn you expect me to be.”

“Naturally.”

“Is this a joke?,” Percy asked.

“Does it look like one to you, Percy Jackson?,” Dolos asked. He sighed and adjusted his poker cap. “Demigods these days. Never willing to take on a gamble.”

“Listen, just because you’re a god of - opportunity, was it? Doesn’t mean you can instantly order around any demigod. Besides, I’ve done more than enough favours for gods to deserve being left alone for the rest of my life.” As Dolos opened his mouth, Percy shook his head. “Actually, scratch that. Knowing the gods, they’d resurrect me from the afterlife just to call in a favour. So I’ve done enough favours for eternity.”

Dolos looked at him. “You just used the opportunities presented to you, like in poker. You read your opponents based on how they act and react, and you’re good at doing that. You should have sacrificed to me countless times, Percy Jackson. I won’t reduce you to ash if you just do me this small favour. I’m generous like that, you know.”

Percy took a deep breath, trying not to bare his teeth and just growl from frustration. His service in Kronos’ army still influenced his behaviour despite everything, and Dolos had taken him out of a counselor meeting for this. “I think I’ll use this opportunity to just go. Now leave me alone or you can join Kronos down there. I was going to have my date and I will have it.”

Dolos’ eyes flashed in anger. “You’d do well not to forget your place and anger a god, demigod.”

Percy glowered at him. “And you’d do well to not anger the son of one of the big twelve whom you have to thank for not fading into obscurity, minor god.” Without paying him any attention, he walked past Dolos, feeling the daggers glared into his back, but feeling too annoyed to care.

*Damn these ungrateful idiots,* Percy thought to himself. *First they betray Olympus, then they come back and demand favours as if they hadn’t tried to overthrow the ones whose boots they’re now licking.* At least he was going to see Ethan, which always was something to brighten his day. As if he balanced him out, Percy mused.
Ever since Kronos’ defeat, Percy struggled to show Ethan that power and cunning weren’t the only strengths and sides of his. That day, Percy showed Ethan that he not only had control over his powers by bending the water with only his will and flicks of his wrist, but also that he was capable of using them for beauty by shaping the water into artistic, intricate designs. For this show, he was awarded with holding hands and, once they’d returned to Sally’s apartment, mutual petting and stroking through hair, one of their remains from their days in the titan army.

Back then, swollen lips and elevated heart rates would have given too much away. Instead, they’d found peace within each other. Percy had been like the calm sea and Ethan had been tranquil. They both had been steadying forces in each other’s unsteady lives - and they still were.

Stroking hair had been simple enough. It left no lasting marks, and yet it had been and still was affectionate and intimate. They’d held hands sometimes, or even hugged occasionally. Sometimes they even cuddled. These comprised the brief, peaceful moments their lives had granted them before either Luke or Kronos sent them on another mission or before Percy would have to report back again.

Strangely, despite the rocky times back then, despite all the fights in-between, despite all the bad memories this might have carried, stroking each other’s hair remained a calming, frequent activity between the two of them. Maybe it was the intimacy of allowing themselves to let go and just feel that brought them to a state of trust and relaxation.

Percy lazily opened his eyes and saw Ethan gazing towards a window where people outside were buzzing with the usual business, a faint smile on his lips and his eye unfocused. Noticing the movement of Percy’s head in his lap, he looked down and stroked his hair further, lightly massaging the scalp.


Percy smiled, sleepy. “Come down here. I wanna pet your hair, too.”

Ethan complied with a smile, laying down so he faced Percy and hugged him. “I got you,” he repeated, breathing in the smell of the sea that always seemed to surround Percy while he stroked his face before Percy turned him around and hugged him from behind, threading his fingers through Ethan’s hair.

“And I got you,” Percy replied and hummed as he took in Ethan’s scent as well. These days, he smelled less like sweat, metal, and blood - these days, he smelled more earthy, probably still remnants of his time in the labyrinth, along with a faint fragrance of cherry blossoms, something he said reminded him of his father. As Percy drifted off to sleep, he heard keys turn in the front door.

When Percy woke up, Ethan was gone and he heard the tea kettle whining in the kitchen. Stretching the stiffness from his limbs, he rose from the couch as his joints popped. He blinked away the last remnants of sleep as he went to the kitchen to find Ethan standing in front of the kettle, frowning as he portioned some kukicha.

Next to him, Percy spotted a steaming cup filled with hot chocolate and marshmallows. He sighed as he picked it up and let the heat seep into his hands. Looking across the table, he noticed Ethan’s cup was just about finished warming up in the microwave and took it out so Ethan could prepare his tea, wrapping his arms around Ethan’s waist from behind and nuzzling his neck. Ethan made a noise and patted his shoulder, and when his tea was all ready to be drunk, they moved back to the couch, sipping their hot beverages until it was time for Ethan to go back to Camp Half-Blood.
Just because they’d saved the world didn’t mean they’d be forgiven easily after all that had happened - deaths they hadn’t been able to prevent, destruction and, well, Kronos almost succeeding. While Percy had managed to make the gods swear on the river Styx to grant his requests - that, as Ethan joked, had almost been like Kaguyahime’s due to the gods’ pride - demigods like Ethan who had served in the titan army were still put to work to make up for some of the damage they’d caused, with the benefit of Ethan being able to directly influence the building of his mother’s cabin. Percy saw him to the door and followed him with his eyes until Ethan was out of sight.

After helping out his mom and Paul as they’d asked him to, Percy went to the camp himself. He greeted Peleus at Thalia’s pine, happy and relieved that the dragon liked him by now, or so it seemed. He’d grown used to Percy not being seen as evil following him with his yellow eyes.

Unfortunately, Peleus was one of the rarer examples showing such an attitude. When Percy entered the camp, some campers still started to whisper when they spotted him, but it had grown less since the end of the Battle of Manhattan - still, rumours were a difficult thing to get rid of.

Ignoring the whispers - fewer than usual, but the camp was rather busy with activity since the summer was coming to its end - he made for the Big House when he didn’t see Ethan near the spaces that were reserved for the new cabins, figuring he’d be discussing the needed materials and working shifts with Chiron. He knocked before entering the big discussion room with their ping pong table and nodded towards Chiron, frowning.

“Ah, Percy. It’s… nice to see you again. How are Sally and Paul?,” Chiron said, smiling, albeit a little stiffly.

“They’re fine and thank you for asking.” He reached back into his backpack and produced a book of poetry. “She thanks you for lending her your book. She liked it and said you could loan her books anytime.”

Chiron’s smile turned warmer, more genuine. Despite being the pillar of their plan to have a spy amidst Kronos’ army, he still seemed a little uneasy, as if Percy might be just acting friendly, as if he still was always ready to eradicate despite his proven loyalty. Not that it surprised Percy, but Chiron showed him much more trust these days - maybe they could be friends sometime, or something similar.

A knock at the door made him turn, expecting to see Ethan, but it was Annabeth. Percy saw her tensing immediately and tried to stay as relaxed as possible. “Percy,” she said, keeping her gaze neutral and her eyes slightly averted.

“Annabeth,” he replied with a smile as easy as possible before turning back towards Chiron. “Actually, Chiron, I was looking for Ethan. Could you please tell me where he is?” The sooner he was able to leave, the better. Annabeth and he had been spending some time together in attempts to mend what had broken, sometimes with Ethan’s help. Losing Luke had hit her hard, but she said she didn’t feel as desperate and alone anymore despite everything that had happened.

“Ethan? He went into the woods to investigate some strange noises about fifteen minutes ago. He insisted on going alone.”

“And that doesn’t strike you as something odd enough to insist on having someone accompany him, especially after you said we shouldn’t go into the woods, especially this week.”

“He was a general of the titan army and said he might have imagined it, and he said he wouldn’t go too far. Plus, he promised to come back as soon as something seemed amiss,” Chiron replied.
Percy sighed. “Let’s just hope it’s not a former member of the army. They’re probably not too happy about us blasting off Kronos’ party, or rather, their dreams.” He purposefully ignored the guilt gnawing in him - he’d deal with it at full force later, but he had Ethan to find for now.

Percy reached down into his pocket and fumbled with Riptide, twisting and twirling it in his finger, absentely noting that the sword in pen form was vibrating softly. In passing, he scanned the trees and kept an ear on his surroundings to see whether he might find Ethan. Due to the rather dire situation earlier that year, probably no demigod, not even the Stolls or the other children of Hermes, would prank someone to go into the woods of the camp, especially since monsters might still be lurking in the underbrush.

Not foolish enough to call out, Percy checked the water that was still soaking the ground for indications of meddling with the forest when he saw a dryad and asked her whether she’d seen his partner. She pointed him towards Zeus’ fist, and Percy felt odd about that. Demigods’ ears might be good, but not that good. Had Ethan chased the sound down?

Just before breaking through the line of trees before the clearing, he saw Ethan crouching behind a tree. “Ethan,” he hissed as he approached and crouched down next to him, attempting to find a spot where he could easily spy on the strangers as well. “What are you doing here? Also, yews are potentially toxic, you idiot - we had to review that stuff a lot, remember?”

Ethan gestured towards the clearing. “That’s why I was hiding here. Don’t worry, we’ll go soon, but - look, over there.”

Percy’s pressed his lips into a thin line as he saw a group of women on the clearing. They were dressed in what looked like ground-long black ceremonial dresses, their faces covered by stylized masks. They were standing in a circle, their arms raised towards the middle.

“What are they doing?,” Percy asked.

“I don’t know,” Ethan said, frowning. “It doesn’t even make sense that I heard them all the way to camp. I figured I should report back and turned around to head back, but got lost in the woods despite not going far in - We should try to go back and inform Chiron about this.”

Percy was about to agree when he heard clicking on the ground when the women stomped on the ground and moved - the rustling of their cloaks wasn’t enough to cover it. He froze. He didn’t know of this many satyrs and even then, Chiron would have mentioned it, warning Percy not to interrupt their rituals to save Ethan and him from their scorn - angering those who could turn dryads against them wasn’t a good idea.

The uneasy feeling increased when he heard a metallic clunk as they stomped and moved again. He’d dealt with enough empousai to know leaving them be could be a bad idea, especially if they, for some reason, were within the camp’s boundaries.

“There’s something strange, though,” Ethan said. “I feel like there was something we should know about this. Empousai should be kept outside by the barrier.”

“We shouldn’t risk anything,” Percy whispered, shifting on the ground to keep the blood in his legs flowing. “Chiron might know of this and even if they are intruders, we’d have better chances with a few more demigods.” He paused, glancing at the circle of empousai. “We should retreat, regroup and discuss this back at camp.”

“Sounds good to me,” Ethan replied and they stood up cautiously. Under their feet, the dirt gave off a disgusting but quiet squelch. Their clothes rustled like the needles on the ground as they remained
low, but when Percy shot the women a look, he froze.

Of course they’d been spotted.
Percy held back the curses that were forming in his mind and put on his hospitable mask. He bowed before the empousai, keeping an eye on them, as did Ethan. “Greetings. We have come in peace and do not mean any harm. We apologize for having interrupted your ritual and, if you’ll allow us, we’ll leave you alone so you can continue,” Percy said, his voice polite and apologetic.

The empousai eyed them warily. “What brought you here, demigods? You interrupted a sacred ritual.”

“Foolish demigods,” the empousa at the front said. “Your explanations are nigh. The sacred goddess and titaness, Lady Hecate, is our mistress and she informed Chiron of our ritual here. These grounds hold great power, as is befitting of a ritual for the great goddess.”

“And we apologize for that!,” Percy said, an uneasy feeling in his gut. Ethan squirmed a bit at his side, trying not to sink down to his knees again. “We didn’t know you’d have a ritual here - just that we weren’t supposed to come - and we apologize. Is there something we can do to make up for our rudeness?”

The empousa frowned. “You - Chiron made sure to have the demigods informed of our ritual so we absolutely would not be interrupted.”

“They must have come here to stop us,” another empousa said.
“Are these two not Perseus Jackson and Ethan Nakamura?,” yet another supplied.

“That must mean they want to steal the power of the ritual to overthrow Lady Hecate!”

The empousa who seemed to be the leader bared her fangs. “Quiet, everyone!” Immediately, the others quieted down, instead eyeing the demigods. Still looking aggressive, the leader turned back towards Percy. “Do you realize that you challenge Lady Hecate herself by interrupting?”

Percy held up his hands, trying to appease her, while Ethan, as usual, kept his mouth shut. “We didn’t mean to, we swear! Back when I was twelve, as you surely know, I had a bout with the god of war himself. I know the gods’ strength, and I know going against them like this is foolish. I was a spy in the Titan army - do you really think I would risk something like angering a titaness?”

Still looking suspicious, the empousai collectively looked at them as if they planned to tear the two apart with just their eyes, trying to unravel the mystery of their appearance.

Their scrutinous gazes kept going on for minutes. Percy stood in front of them. He’d had to do this often, under the eyes of the lord of time who could make minutes seem like hours and seconds like an eternity. Slowly, he reached for Ethan’s hand after noticing his slight shivering and, after seeing that the empousai permitted the action, took Ethan’s hand and squeezed it. They didn’t meet each others’ eyes, still fixated on the women before them, but Percy could feel the tension slowly leaving Ethan’s body.

The forest around them was quiet, as if it was holding its breath, as if it was watching and waiting for the outcome. The wind softly rustled the leaves above them while the sun sent its rays shining through the foliage, lighting up the ground with patches of light. Percy didn’t exactly like that, as if by coincidence, they were highlighting Ethan’s and his throats and chests where their hearts would be, but he resolved himself to enjoy the warmth they brought instead of cursing about Apollo.

The leader finally acted again. “Ethan Nakamura.” Percy squeezed the hand a fraction harder. “You said you came here because you heard a suspicious noise coming from the forest. Is that true?”

Ethan visibly tried not to gulp. “Yes.”

“If it was not your intention to interrupt the Mormolykeian ritual, what else do you think the noise could have been?,” she asked, her gaze still piercing.
“I thought that a remnant of the Titan Army might have slipped through the barrier one way or the other.” Ethan gulped. “I knew we were not supposed to go too deeply into the forest, so I assumed the ritual couldn’t have been the cause because I figured that whatever might be going on in here couldn’t be this loud.”

Following this, the mormolykeiai - who, thinking about it, did look a bit like vampires - were silent for another few seconds that seemed to stretch forever until finally, their leader spoke up again, turning towards her sisters. “Does any one of you have objections? I believe Ethan Nakamura’s reasoning.”

One of the mormolykeiai raised her claw. “However, I do not. If they had supposedly heard sounds coming from the forest and followed them until they found us, should we not have heard these sounds as well?”

Murmurs erupted from the rows. “A valid question,” the leader said and turned back towards Ethan. Ethan shrank a bit and his hand got a bit sweatier. “What is your answer, demigod?”

Ethan took in a breath, deep, and slightly shivering. “I lost the sounds after a while and decided to follow nevertheless in hopes of finding the source. Then I heard clunks and investigated. That was when Percy caught up and we were about to leave when you spotted us.”

The leader nodded. “Is that answer satisfying?”

The mormolykeia wrinkled her nose. “There is also the issue of Percy Jackson still having Anaklusmos in his hand.”

Percy tilted his head. “If I’d wanted to attack you, I could’ve done so many times over, and not just with Riptide. Let alone with the two of us together. And there’s still the fact that we don’t want to get on the bad side of your mistress.”

The mormolykeia bared her teeth. “Point taken, demigods.”

Percy nodded and looked back at the leader. “We answered your questions. If there is no need to redeem ourselves, we would like to leave now, so may we?”

“I see no reason to keep you here. You’d only be a hindrance, anyway,” their leader said and Percy
and Ethan nodded.

Then, the annoying mormolykeia tensed and, a split second later, the others as well. Percy and Ethan went still themselves before they heard it - the slightest rustle of leaves, and a distant heaving. They turned around and, by a hair, Percy managed to push Ethan out of the way of the fox that just missed Ethan’s arm, therefore only brushing against it with its tail. It came at high speed and flew far, and the mormolykeiai apparently were still slow. The fox crashed into the one who’d doubted them and tore into her arms, sending her screaming as she beat at it with her unharmed one as the other mormolykeiai stood in shock for one or two seconds before rushing in. Before they were able to get a grip on it, however, it jumped away from his prey, having realized it wasn’t its aim, and landed in a few meters’ distance.

The fox had deep black fur safe for the white area around its snout and its red-tipped paws and tail. The fur around its snout was dipped in the blood of the mormolykeia, who was surrounded by her sisters whose claws were glinting in the light. They had assumed a defensive position as to not allow one of them to be hurt again.

“This… That’s the Theumessian fox, isn’t it?,” Ethan gasped.

“How do we beat it?,” Percy asked.

“I don’t know! It was made to never be caught! The only reason why it ended up dead was because of a dog that was said to catch anything, so to resolve the paradox, Zeus turned both of them to stone,” Ethan stammered before he was jumped by the fox again. He and Percy had their swords in their respective hand and stood ready, though the fox was cursedly fast.

Percy moved in a blur. Riptide never even touching a hair of the fox that continued to move with lightning speed. He skipped forward and backward, trying to keep the fox away from Ethan - without success, as Ethan found out as he, too, had to dodge attacks, and more than once, the demigods had to dodge each other, too, as the fox used its speed in an attempt to confuse them into cutting one another.

Panting, Percy went over to Ethan, still keeping his eyes alert on his surroundings while he wound an arm around Ethan, helping him stand up. He noticed Ethan tensing and felt his weight dragging him down, so he looked at him. And froze.
The fox had managed to draw blood - no, rip flesh. Ethan had a gash on his arm. It didn’t look too deep or to big, but there was a lot of blood and the wound looked severe. Similar to Ethan, a sob from the mormolykeia came over and Percy regarded them with a cautious glance. While half of them were still keeping watch, the other half had gathered around their wounded member.

“Demigods, did you bring this cursed fox here?,” one of them asked.

“Why would we?,” Percy said. “Ethan is wounded. Why would I risk that?”

The leader took a look at him and paused. “Go now,” she said gravely. “We need to take care of our own, and you of yours. Know, however, that this will not be without consequences, regardless of your involvement.” She held up her hand as he opened his mouth. “Whether that is fair or not will be neither our nor your decision.”

Percy could do no more than nod. He looked at Ethan and unceremoniously took off his shirt and ripped off stripes with which he tried to bandage Ethan’s arm to stop the bleeding. He’d still have to make his way to camp, so he couldn’t afford to care too much about the mormolykeiai, but he still gave them a glance. “I’ll hurry. If there’s something I can do after Ethan is taken care of, let me know.”

His offer went unanswered, so he glanced to his side where Ethan was holding his arm. The stripes were already soaked and blood was dripping down his arm. Percy frowned. Even a wound like that ought to start healing after some time. Already feeling sick, he closed his eyes, reached out and grasped Ethan’s blood and a wham went through Percy as he could feel the entire life force of Ethan, the seventy percent of water he consisted of, and he clenched his teeth as he felt a rush go through him. Evening out his breath, he concentrated solely on the wound on Ethan’s arm, working on preventing the blood from dripping out further, and when he thought he was able to control it, he opened his eyes again to face Ethan.

It must have only taken him half a minute or so at maximum, but Ethan was visibly tense and his face was pale. “I can feel you,” Ethan said, and Percy flinched at the tiny voice.

“Uhm, yes,” Ethan said. “My arm is hurt, not my legs.”
“Right,” Percy said. “I just… Need something to ground myself with. Is that okay?”

“Y-Yeah,” Ethan said, shivering a little. Trembling, they made their way back to camp.

Chapter End Notes

Let the angst begin.

Comments are appreciated.

End Notes

Let's hope I don't take too long with updating this. Thank you for reading.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!