

CLASS OF THE TITANS

"Bird Man of Olympus"

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First Draft:

TEASER

INT. TRAILER -- NIGHT

WE PAN the walls of this nonedescript TRAILER:Peeling POSTERS indicate the abode of a circus performer of some kind. Indeed, we move in on one for: MEPHISTO - MASTER OF THE BEASTS - slick-haired, tuxed up - surrounded by WILD ANIMALS. From the poster, we move towards the BED. Here snores the great Mephisto himself, far less impressive in real life.

He snorts, turns over,and SCREAMS:

From his POV: A SNAKE - hissing, viciously inches from his head. Mephisto regains composure, grabs the SNAKE by the head.

MEPHISTO

How the heck did you get out?

He leans over the bed, pulls open the lid to a heavy wicker BASKET: Inside Three MORE Snakes rear to life.

MEPHISTO (CONT'D)

(nonchalant)

- Settle down guys...

He curls the wandering snake in amongst the others, closes the lid. He's about to buckle the straps, but pauses, thinking of something. He reaches up to a shelf in which a dozen or so WHITE MICE scurry in GLASS CAGE. HE dips into it, grabs a rodent - tosses that into the basket.

MEPHISTO (CONT'D)

(Buckling the straps)

Now, can we all get some sleep?

We've got two shows tommorow.

He flops back on the bed. Suddenly, eyes wide - he lets out another SCREAM. This scream is stifled by CRONUS'S HAND over his mouth. Mephisto makes a motion to bolt, but is frozen with fear as Cronus menacingly raises his SICKLE.

CRONUS

(Taking in the snake
basket and mouse
cage)

Quite the 'Doctor Dolittle' aren't
we? Good...

With that: Cronus raises his sickle. As the weapon rises, so does the terrified man - as if rising on a unseen stretcher, bed clothes slipping off in mid-air.

CRONUS (CONT'D)

- Perhaps you'd like to converse
with some *other* animals?

A twist of Cronus's hand, and Mephisto is enveloped by a pulsating tunnel of light. He responds as if being electrocuted.

MEPHISTO

Argggghhh!

Cronus drops his hand, and Mephisto crashes back down onto the bed, drenched in sweat - eyes, glimmering trance-like.

CRONUS

Now!

Under a spell, Mephisto bolts upright, turns to the look down at the snake basket:

MEPHISTO

(in ANCIENT GREEK)

Come my beauties!!

THE BASKET: Bucks, rolls and splinters. The snakes, forcing their way out on his command. Like obedient guard dogs, they sway, heads together - HISSING.

CRONUS

(smiling)

Good...good!

OVER THIS: SFX - MONSTROUS 'CRAWING'...

WIPE TO:

INT. CAVE -- CONTINUOUS

Mist swirls across the MARSH-like floor of an enormous CAVE. The mist open to reveal: A giant glistening EGG. *Something* INSIDE wants out. The egg jerks, rolls forward, bumping up against a GIANT reptilian TALON. PULL BACK TO REVEAL: The talons are the feet of a per-historic BIRD - TOWERING over her nest of

eggs. Peck, peck, peck! As a vicious *metallic* BEAK pokes through the shell..

END TEASER

ACT ONE

JAY (V.O.)

..I don't believe this guy!

INT. DORM COMMON ROOM -- EVENING

The Titans Gang "hanging out": THERESA and JAY are astounded at ODIE'S dexterity of thumb, as he plays a new GAME BOY type devise.

JAY

(Over Odie's shoulder)

- He's got thumbs of steel.

As Odie drills away on the GAME with his thumb.

JAY (CONT'D)

Fifteen hundred credits! How does he do it?

As a "victory march" beeps from Odie's Game.

THERESA

He doesn't have a life - *that's* how he does it.

ODIE

(non-pluss)

You guys are just jealous...

Zappp! With a smirk, Odie runs up another hundred points.

TV HOST (O.S.)

...And welcome to "FROM LOSER TO LORD"..

On the TV, a slick HOST stands in front of two life size CUT-OUTS: The first, a sloppy dressed 'dude, the second - a shiny GQ type guy.

TV HOST (CONT'D)

- The show where we take THIS...

He indicates sloppy cut-out:

TV HOST (CONT'D)

- And with our team of make over
specialists - turn it into: THIS -

He points at GQ cut-out. As he does: Archie who has
a plate with a triple-decker sandwich balanced on
his belly, burps, reaches past Neil for his soda -
and spills it all over him. Neil leaps up.

NEIL

Hey!

ARCHIE

(munching)

Sorry...

Neils' shirt is stained with drink.

NEIL

This is a two hundred thread linen
shirt - sheesh - why are you *always*
so messy?

ARCHIE

(munching)

I'm not messy...

He watches Neil frantically clean himself.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

(grin)

You need to chill out 'dude.

NEIL

(angrily daubing
himsels)

And you need...

On the TV show: The SCHLUMPY guy is being fitted
with a suit jacket by a fussy FASHION ADVISER guy.
The adviser steps back to admire.

FASHION ADVISOR

Oh..yes,yes,YES!

He applauds. Schumpy guy looks sheepish.

NEIL

...you need
(points to TV)
THAT.

ARCHIE

Huh?

NEIL

- A lesson in style and class - by
an expert!

ARCHIE

(munching his sandwich)
Forget it! I'm perfect the way I am!

But the grin is wiped from his face, when he's greeted
by blank stares from the others. He looks at Atlanta.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

...Aren't I?

Trying not to - Atlanta takes in Archie's messy
attire.

ATLANTA

Um..well..

Beat. Theresa jumps up.

THERESA

(ever the diplomat)
Hey - let's order some pizza!

Strangely - they ALL rush for the YELLOW PAGES: "good
idea" "Which one should we call" etc.

Archie slumps from the room:

WIPE TO:

INT. DORM WASHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Archie looking at himself in the mirror. He frowns
at the stain on his T-Shirt.

ARCHIE

(to himself)
'Lessons in style and class" Huh.

But IN THE MIRROR: he sees Atlanta's look of
disapproval.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

Hm. Maybe I *do* need a few lessons...

He jumps: Neil's FACE looms large in the mirror next
to him - grinning.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

Wha...?

NEIL

- And I'm just the man to coach you,
my friend!

Archie looks horrified.

CUT TO:

INT. CAVE -- CONTINUOUS

CRONUS steps into a shaft of LIGHT. MIST swirling around his legs. He looks up: THE MOTHER BIRD, lowers her razor-sharp metallic beak to one of her HATCHLINGS. Like Disney gone grotesque - the hatchling playfully ducks under her wing. In response, the Mother 'ruffles' her wings - revealing even more EGGS deposited at her feet. Cronus smiles.

CRONUS

(TO MOTHER)

Hm - I see you've been 'busy'.
Excellent...

He looks down: ANOTHER hatchling is crawling from an egg. A TALON protrudes from the shell.

CRONUS (CONT'D)

(To Mother)

Now - have you ever considered letting
your children join the circus...?

CUT TO:

INT. NEIL'S ROOM -- LATER

Archie and Neil, standing in front of a full-length MIRROR. A hotel-type CLOTHES RACK is parked nearby, CRAMMED with Neil's "ensembles" etc. Archie is in the midst of a "make-over" - hair plastered down, tight suit and shoes. VERY uncomfortable. Fussing around Archie, Neil is in his element.

NEIL

(admiring)

Well, you're lookin' "stylin" - but
we need...more.

ARCHIE

More?

NEIL

Looks aren't everything.
(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)

If you wanna look cultured, you've gotta BE cultured. Trust me - the "Renaissance Dude" thing? Chicks LOVE it.

ARCHIE

They do?

Neil tightens the tie, chocking Archie. But Archhie breaks away, excited. Something has caught his eye. He snatches up the NEWSPAPER.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

The circus!

NEIL

What?

He holds up the AD:

ARCHIE

(reads)

'CIRCUS OF THE IMPOSSIBLE!' A spectacle of circus skills, theatrics and dance.

(excited)

That's 'art' isn't it?

NEIL grabs the paper. From his POV we SEE: A pic of the Circus: A virtual 'city' of spired Tents.

NEIL

Sure - if you like clowns on little bikes...

ARCHIE

(grabbing the paper back)

No, no. This is classy! Atlanta's gonna love this.

Whoops!

NEIL

(raised eyebrow)

Atlanta?

ARCHIE

Um..well..yeah..if she wants to tag along..

Archie blushes.

WIPE TO:

EXT. "CIRCUS OF THE IMPOSSIBLE" SITE -- EVENING

ATLANTA (O.S.)

Wow - I can't believe you got these
seats for free Archie...

CUT TO:

INT. "CIRCUS OF THE IMPOSSIBLE" MAIN TENT -- CONTINUOUS

Archie, Atlanta - with Neil in behind them - settling
into their seats. The MAIN TENT is HUGE, with an
audience of thousands. Archie is now done up to the
'nines'- Neil style.

ATLANTA

(mouth open)
...These must be the most expensive
in the house -
(giggles)
I mean - 'Tent'.

ARCHIE

(glance at smirking
Neil)
Yeah. Some guy...I did a favour
for..um...gave them to me. Thought
you might like to -

NEIL

(cutting in)
"Tag along" ?

ATLANTA

(excited)
I LOVE the circus!

Big grin from Archie when she inches closer - then
suddenly -

ARCHIE

(over-casual)
It's okay, I guess.

He's struggling to breath through his tight tie.

ATLANTA

(concerned)
Maybe you should loosen that knot?

Archie goes to - but Neil slaps his hand away.

NEIL

That's a "windsor knot" - don't mess
with perfection!

Atlanta waits for Archie to protest. He doesn't.
She looks disappointed. She's about to say something
but is cut off by:

PULSATING THEME MUSIC, cuing a fantastic LIGHT SHOW.
Bringing the audience's attention to: CENTER RING.

RISING FROM THE BELOW THE FLOOR: Something that looks
like a MONOLITH. A STRUCTURE draped in satin. The
satin slips away, revealing a magnificent GOLD BIRD
CAGE - illiciting gasps from the audience. In the
center of the Cage, surrounded by DOVES is MEPHISTO -
MASTER OF THE BIRDS! The Same man we saw in the
Teaser. He stretches his arms out.

MEPHISTO

(booming through
microphone)

Ladies and gentlemen: I give you -
the Ballet of The Skies!

His "Ballet of The Skies" is a stunning visual
display. The birds seem to flow around him. It's
breath-taking. He scoops two Doves up in his hands
and whispers to them. With that - they fly up and
around, roll, and land on his shoulders.

The Finale: Mephisto issues commands - and the doves
evelope him like a cloak. The lights snap off. On
again - and MEPHISTO is gone. The crowd jumps to
its feet.

CUT TO:

EXT. CIRCUS MAIN TENT -- MOMENTS LATER

The crowd dispersing. Archie and Atlanta chatter
excitedly.

ARCHIE

Whoaa - was that cool, or what?

ATLANTA (O.S.)

- It's almost like he can actually
talk to them...

Achie does an elaborate impression of Mephisto.

ARCHIE
(arms waving:phony
accent)
...I give you - the ballet of the
skies!!

Archie and Atlanta laugh - till Archie catches Neil's
eye. Neil shakes his head in disapproval as if to
indicate "Not Cool". At this, Archie stiffens again.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
(snooty tone to Atlanta)
Yeah - but it's just a bunch of dumb
tricks with birds. Let's split.

He strides off, Atlanta frowns.

ATLANTA
(uder her breath)
...I think I prefer the 'sloppy'
Archie to 'Mister Stuck-Up'...

NEIL
(Hears this)
Well - get use to it babe.

ATLANTA
Babe?!!

She's about to explode, but something catches her
eye: Her POV: Striding towards a FLAP under the Main
Tent: Mephisto.

ATLANTA (CONT'D)
(calling after the
guys)
There's Mephisto! You know - I've
just gotta meet him...

Before Neil and Archie can protest, she runs off.

ARCHIE
(weak call after her)
What about the After Show 'mock-
tails?'...?

Neil swats him.

CUT TO:

INT. BELOW MAIN CIRCUS TENT -- CONTINUOUS

Atlanta slips through the FLAP: Instantly, it's as if she's in another world. Stepping through Slats of shadows thrown from the enormous WOODEN STRUTS supporting the seating above - almost cavernous. She shakes off the uneasy feeling and steps in...

As she moves through the dark:

MEPHISTO

You've served me well my beauties...

Suddenly Atlanta can make out a shaft of LIGHT - she ducks behind a strut: Her POV: The Gilded Cage with numerous Doves. Nearby - another BULKY SHAPE, covered in SATIN. From it -

SFX: DISORTED, OTHER-WORLDDY 'SQUAWKING'

MEPHISTO (CONT'D)

...But your time with me has ended.

Mephisto steps into the light and up to the BULKY SHAPE. He raises his hand and the satin cover slips off to reveal: ANOTHER CAGE. But this one constructed of heavy wood. It looks THOUSANDS of years old. Atlanta catches her breath when she sees what's IN the ancient cage: TWO BIRDS of a kind she's never seen: Razor-tipped metallic beaks and talons. They stretch their wings and metal tips flash in the light. At their feet, in sawdust - lay several glistening giant EGGS - One of them is hatching.

Mephisto opens the door of the DOVE cage. For a beat - silence: Then SQAWKKKKK! From the Metallic Birds.

In one movement, the DOVES take frantic flight - like a tornado in reverse - funnelling up through the Cage 'drop', up into the Main Tent. Atlanta lets out an audible gasp. The two Birds and Mephisto turn in her direction as...

SHOCK CUT TO:

EXT. CIRCUS MAIN TENT -- CONTINUOUS

Archie and Neil walking away from the now empty Circus site. The sound of the fleeing doves makes them spin round.

The Doves erupt like a volcano through the top vent of the Main Tent - trailing like a jet cloud across the night sky.

ARCHIE

What..????

NEIL

(flat)

That's not good, is it...?

CUT TO:

INT. BELOW MAIN CIRCUS TENT -- CONTINUOUS

With the same alert expressions, the Birds and Mephisto - peer into the dark, as Atlanta presses back against the wooden Strut. Mephisto takes a step in her direction...

CRONUS (O.S.)

I don't believe I've ever enjoyed the Circus so much -

Mephisto turns: Into his light steps a grinning CRONUS. He offers a forearm to one of the Birds. The Birds just squawk viciously at him.

CRONUS (CONT'D)

(shrugs)

Hm..

(to Mephisto)

You're a true showman Mephisto - or, should I say - Melampus?!

ANGLE ON ATLANTA.

ATLANTA

(whisper)

'Melampus'?

MEPHISTO/MELAMPUS

(bowing)

- Yes Master.

CRONUS

(indicating the Birds)

And I'm delighted you agreed to introduce some 'new blood' into the performance -

Again, Cronus attempts to touch the Bird. Again it spits at him. Until Mephisto/Melampus puts a hand to it's head - which seems to settle it instantly.

CRONUS (CONT'D)

- Only your ancient magic can control
the Stympthalian Birds - and command
them to do MY bidding!

Horrified, Atlanta steps back - knocking a discarded
HAMMER onto the floor. She freezes. Cronus,
Mephisto/Melampus spin round. The birds, suddenly
alert to a threat. In panic, Atlanta goes to retrieve
the hammer, trips - kicking it out into the light.

Cronus grins down as it spins to a stop at his feet.

CRONUS (CONT'D)

(to Mephisto/Melampus)

They must be quite hungry by now. I
suggest it's time for - LUNCH!!

MEPHISTO/MELAMPUS

(To birds - perhaps
in Ancient Language)

Attack!!!

The two STYMPHALIAN BIRDS fly towards Atlanta at
breath-taking speed. She ducks, and the birds SLAM
into the HEAVY v SHAPE struts above her head. The
wood splinters - but the Birds are unharmed. They
rear back - stabbing at her through the gap - but
there's not enough room for two.

Like a cat, Atlanta rolls backwards into the shadows -
her WRIST-LASER CROSS BOW at the ready. A movement
right behind, has her spin round - Crossbow poised
ready.

ARCHIE (O.S.)

...Sheesh - you could hurt someone
with that.

He jerks his head into a shaft of light, grinning.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

You probably want some help, right?

She's about to respond, when a pair of TALONS sweeps
over her head.

ATLANTA

Ahhhhh!

She dives out of the way.

NEIL

(joining Archie)

- I'd take that as a "yes"...

They both leap across a gap in the Struts - all three Titans now in the light - back to back - as the STYMPHALIIAN BIRDS circle around them, jabbing with razor beaks.

Atlanta: In rapid succession she fires her laser-crossbow. But as quick as she is, the Birds are quicker - and she can't hit a target. One bird dives toward her. She catapults over it, spins and fires - but the bird is gone...already hovering over Archie - Talons flashing.

Armed with the Haephaestus Whip, Archie cracks it with precision - the bird backs off a moment, but the second bird is almost on him from behind - he spins round - this time the whip makes contact. SquawwwwwKKKK!

Meanwhile, Neil finds himself weaponless. Until he backs up against an old, discarded CIRCUS TRUNK. Looking for ANYTHING he can use, he flips open the lid and grabs a DIABOLO. He flings that at one of the Birds. It bounces off. The bird dive bombs him. In panic he reaches in for something else - a BIG FLOPPY CLOWN SHOE.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Huh?

The bird is almost on him - he winds up and WACKS it across the head with the shoe - the bird winces in pain.

Meanwhile - the Hatchling has discarded its shell and, *it* too is ready to feed. Mephisto/Melempus shouts a command - the young Bird rockets towards Atlanta. She fiddles with the Laser Crossbow - but the bird rams into her. She's on the ground, the lethal beak inches from her face. The bird rears up for the kill, as -

Archie and Neil moving as one - football-tackle-dive for the Hatchling, sending it sprawling.

But the OTHER two birds see their chance - they swoop - scooping Archie, then Neil - up in their talons, like a couple of flapping salmons.

ARCHIE/NEIL

Argggghhhhh!

In seconds they are being carried up through the "drop" towards the Upper Vent.

Atlanta sees *her* chance - and rolls under a dense forest of struts. In a moment - she's gone. The Hatchling circles in frustration. Cronus turns on Mephisto/Melampus.

CRONUS

Where have the birds taken the Titans?

MEPHISTO/MELAMPUS

(smiling)

Back to the nest of course - the young ones will need feeding now.

He turns back to the cage - several MORE eggs are now hatching. He almost has paternal tears in his eyes.

MEPHISTO/MELAMPUS (CONT'D)

But what of the girl? Won't she brings others?

CRONUS

(grins)

Undoubtedly - and the more the merrier!

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT, OLYMOUS HIGH -- EVENING

SFX: SQUAWKING OF YOUNG HATCHLINGS - SOUND TRANSITION
INTO: CACOPHONY OF BIRD SONGS AS WE -

CUT TO:

INT. HERAS' AVIARY, OLYMPUS HIGH -- CONTINUOUS

ANGLE ON : BEAUTIFUL PLUMED BIRD...

As HERA places it gently on a tree limb.

ATLANTA (O.S.)

- I've never seen anything like this -

Hera turns to face the frantic Atlanta, who's just finished telling the story to a dumb-struck ODIE, JAY, HERRY and THERESA. CHIRON looks on.

HERA

(Gentle to Atlanta)

Calm yourself...

ATLANTA

(pacing)

- They're like...flying razor blades!

Hera guides Atlanta to a seat, but she springs to her feet again.

CHIRON

(thoughtful)

Indeed.

THERESA

(to Chiron)

You *know* what these things are, Chiron?

A look passes between Chiron and Hera - Chiron continues.

CHIRON

- The STMPHALIAN BIRDS. Creatures that almost destroyed the Old Hercules. A *formidable* foe.

HERRY

(concerned, to Chiron)

Okay - but - the Titans can take 'em out, right Chiron?

CHIRON

I admire your resolve Herry - but there is only one man who can control these Birds: Melampus -

ATLANTA

"Melampus"? *That's* what Cronus started calling this Mephisto guy!

Chiron shakes his head at this.

CHIRON

If that is true...this time, Cronus
has assembled a fearsome force...

WIPE TO:

INT. BELOW MAIN CIRCUS TENT -- CONTINUOUS

In the murky darkness, Mephisto/Melampus is tending to the injured Bird. Around him - hatchlings break through their shells...

CHIRON (O.S.)

...For only Melampus was given the
magic to converse with all manner of
beasts...

Mephisto/Melampus picks up a hatchling, and coos affectionately at it.

CHIRON (CONT'D)

- and they will do his every
bidding...

Mephisto/Melampus grinning demonically as the vicious creature nuzzles against his chest.

WIPE BACK TO:

INT. HEAR'S AVIARY, OLYMPUS HIGH -- CONTINUOUS

ATLANTA

- But where have they taken Archie
and Neil?

CHIRON

Somewhere close by - but hidden...

Chiron's theory is interrupted by: BEEPING. It's Odie fiddling with the display on his PMR: It's flashing a sequence of numbers.

ODIE

- I'll say.
(beaming proud)
I've just locked into their position
utilizing the GSP function on their
PMR'S.
(aside to Atlanta)
- A brilliant little addition, if I
say so myself...

His POV: The DISPLAY: an oscillating digital 'rough' of Mountain landscape.

ODIE (CONT'D)

They're in the mountains. Close by -
but moving FAST.

CLOSE UP: The GSP display on Odie's PMR: A grinning
Odie relected in it's face.

CHIRON (O.S.)

As I postulated: The Birds seldom
nest far from their Hunting Ground.

JAY

A 'nest'? Great!

CHIRON

...I suggest that somewhere in the
Mountain there exists an impenetrable
MARSH. It is there they will feel
safest to raise their young.

THERESA

Their 'young'? - you mean there's
gonna be more of them?

CHIRON

Their strength *IS* their numbers.

JAY

You mean - *apart* from SWISS army
knives for beaks?
(flat)
This is gonna be fun...

ODIE

(More buttons pushing)
Yeah - all we hafta do now - is go
get 'em!

OVER THIS:

NEIL & ARCHIE (O.S.)

- Ahhhhhhggggggggggggg! -

CUT TO:

EXT. VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN TOP -- NIGHT

Screaming like banshees - Neil and Archie are held
tight by the Stymphalian Bird's Talons, as they break
through Cloud and plummet into the Mouth of the
Mountain: Hundreds of feet down a sheer rock shaft...

CUT TO:

INT. VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN TOP/MARSH -- CONTINUOUS

- From way too high - Neil and Archie are dropped unceremoniously. They tumble through a layer of MIST, landing - thankfully - on soft, Marshy ground. And promptly - start to sink. And sink. When the mud/marsh reaches their chests, they stop sinking. Eyes wide - they look round: Nothing, except - in the shadows: the CHILLING ECHO of countless Stymphalian Birds...

NEIL

(gagging on mud)
Whatever happens - this is gonna cost a fortune in dry-cleaning...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HILL TOP ABOVE CIRCUS SITE -- NIGHT

ODIE (O.S.)

(Voice on PMR)
...Jay - I'm not sure I agree with splitting into teams...

WE MOVE IN ON: Jay and Theresa, looking down on the Circus site: Jay surveying the scene through binoculars..

JAY

(to Odie on PMR)
What? You need me to hold your hand? You find Archie and Neil - we'll check out this Melampus dude...

ODIE (O.S.)

Great. We do the dangerous stuff - you get to take in a show with your girlfriend..you know, I think we...

Theresa grabs her PMR.

THERESA

(Very sharp)
Odie!

ODIE

(beat)
Okay - see ya later.

Click.

THERESA
(ignoring Jay's grin)
Let's just do this, shall we?

She moves off.

CUT TO:

EXT. VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN TOP -- CONTINUOUS

Approaching the the windswept SUMMIT: Odie, Herry and Atlanta, weighed down with climbing gear.

Odie drops his pack, pulls something from the side compartment: A Short, barrel shaped DEVISE - lights running up and down.

HERRY
So what's that - a coffee flask?

Odie shoots him a look as he fingers his new invention.

ODIE
- A tad more complex than *that* my friend...

The DEVISE opens to reveal complex innards - circuit, etc. Odie punches in some numbers on a mini keyboard.

ODIE (CONT'D)
- A new foe requires a new weapon - and THIS one uses the principles of Phonons...

HERRY
"Phonons"?

ODIE
(lost in the details)
...a wave which passes like a ripple through a solid, causing a momentary displacement of atoms..

HERRY
- Just tell us what it does, Ode!

ODIE
(blink)
Oh. Well - basically it's a "noise maker"

ATLANTA

- noise maker?

ODIE

Yes, but one - I'm convince - will
seriously mess with our metallic-
feathered friends! This is gonna be
a walk in the park...

A MONSTROUS squawk/roar cuts him off: It seems to
have come from the PEAK looming ahead of them. A
Peak, shrouded in boiling red mist illuminating the
black sky. Odie GULPS.

CUT TO:

INT. VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN TOP/MARSH -- CONTINUOUS

Neil and Archie 'wading' through the goop - but
getting nowhere. Suddenly - salvation! A large,
grey 'rock' to grab hold of. Archie reaches for it.
As he does - it SPLITS down the center - and a
metallic BEAK jabs through. Archie recoils in horror.
Behind his head - ANOTHER egg is cracking. Before
they know it: half-dozen, new "Hatchlings" are zeroing
in on them, wading through the mud - hungry to tuck
into the surprise "morsels" . The boys try to "swim"
away - but the marsh holds them like mollasses...

Two hatchlings are within 'snacking' distance - razor
beaks inches from Neil's face when - they suddenly
turn on *each other*, each determined to claim the
prize. In a moment, all the hatchlings are pecking
at each other.

NEIL

Whaooo!

- As Archie has him by the collar.

NEIL (CONT'D)

..Wha...?

ARCHIE

Over here!

With super human strength, Archie drags/pushes Neil
through the thick marsh to a narrow CREVISE in the
ROCK FACE. He shoves Neil into the tight space...

NEIL

...Hey - watch the 'threads'!

ARCHIE

Never mind about that - get in!

In the tight space, they're face to face, panting.

NEIL

You know, as we're spending this "extra" time together - I have to say: YOU have got to learn to respect your clothes more.

(over-serious)

Don't try to tell me you haven't heard the saying - "Clothes Make The Man."...?

Archie bites his lip.

ARCHIE

(controlled)

Can we...talk...about...this...later?

NEIL

(shrugs)

Whatever...

Archie lets out a deep sigh.

CUT TO:

INT. BELOW MAIN CIRCUS TENT -- CONTINUOUS

Jay and Theresa let the TENT FLAP close behind them. Their flashlights take in a WALL of struts and heavy support beams in front of them. For a second, both seem nervous about continuing. Then:

JAY

(determined)

Okay. Let's "rock n' roll"!

THERESA

(flat)

Do people still say that...?

They move off, as they do, Jay bangs his head on an overhead strut.

JAY

Owww!

THERESA

Good start...

OFF: JAY RUBBING HIS HEAD.

CUT TO:

INT. VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN - ROCK SHAFT -- CONTINUOUS

Hanging like spiders from the rock face: Odie, Herry and Atlanta. Herry gives the signal - and the three propel down their ropes.

Odie's POV: As they drop down into the cave/marsh proper - His powerful FLASHLIGHT cutting through the Mist - The Marsh: huge, slimy, and creepy. For a moment, they hang there again, taking it in.

ODIE

Is this a bad time to mention my
fear of...dark, creepy places?

His flashlight catches Atlanta's steely response.

ODIE (CONT'D)

(quiet)
- I guess not.

WIPE TO:

INT. BELOW MAIN CIRCUS TENT -- CONTINUOUS

Jay and Theresa, deeper into the Labyrinth - the shadows seeming to move around them, as if they're alive and there's some other *force* at work down here. Every 'tunnel' - 'cross-over' under the seating - looks exactly like the previous.

THERESA

(whisper)
We might have to re-think this - cos
I'm completely lost.

JAY

(looking past her)
Yeah - maybe we *should* rethink
this...but not because we're lost.

Theresa follows his gaze: To the open area where Atlanta had encountered Mephisto/Melampus earlier:

But THIS time - Mephisto/Melampus is tending at least a DOZEN Stympthalian birds, who have hatched in the meantime, and seem to grow bigger and stronger before their eyes. The young birds peck and claw at each other as Mephisto/Melampus smiles on.

He wispers a command: They rise together, circle briefly, and settle around him again - like - a ballet.

JAY (CONT'D)
(to Theresa)
This joker's full of tricks.

THERESA
(more to herself)
He's not the *only* one..

But Jay is already checking in with Odie.

JAY
(whisper on PMR)
Odie. There's ...DOZENS of these critters now!

ODIE
(Over the PMR to Jay)
..Well - be careful down there...
(peers round in the dark)
- Looks like there's no one home up here..

CUT TO:

INT. VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN TOP/MARSH -- CONTINUOUS

Odie, Herry and Atlanta drop the last few feet, landing on soft ground.

SFX: SUCKING/WET SOUND.

ODIE
(to Jay)
- Wait -

The three Titans spin round, flashlights desperately trying to find the source of the noise.

ODIE (CONT'D)
(whisper)
What IS that?

JAY (O.S.)
Odie...?

CUT TO:

INT. BELOW MAIN CIRCUS TENT -- CONTINUOUS

Jay tapping his headset. All he can hear is 'crackling' static.

JAY

Odie...?

Nothing. Jay shoots Theresa a look that asks - "now what's happened?"

CUT TO:

INT. VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN TOP/MARSH -- CONTINUOUS

Odie's flashlight reveals NEIL and ARCHIE, still clinging to the cervise, 'squelching' as the fight to stay above the swap. They blink pathetically in the light.

NEIL

(lifting a muddy leg)
What took you so long, dudes?

ODIE

(sarcastic)
...We *would* have made it sooner, but for some reason the three hundred foot rock-face slowed us down!

ARCHIE

(grimace from mud in his pants)
Hey - cry me a river, I'm up to my "y-fronts" in mud here!

Neil is just about to grab Herry's helping hand - he looks back.

NEIL

(horried - to Archie)
You wear 'Y-fronts'?

ARCHIE

(boiling)
- Don't even GO there pal!

Neil shrugs, grabs Herry's hand.

ATLANTA

(to Archie)
Can we cut the bickering and get out of here?

Atlanta offers her hand to Archie - but macho - Archie ignores it, hauls himself out of the crevice. She rolls her eyes.

Alert, Odie pulls out the SONIC BLASTER out at the ready. Neil eyes it.

NEIL

Whatever that thing is - take my word for it - *that's* just gonna annoy them...

ODIE

Really? Well I think you'll find...

SFX: LOUD, INHUMAN ROAR

The rescuers spin round, their lights searching for the source of the sound.

They find it: The beam of their lights merge to make one big spotlight. In it: an ARMY of Stymphalian Birds: HUNDREDS of them all around the Titans....some rising up from the goop of the Marsh; some perched on twisted vines. The rest, perched like vultures along jagged rock surfaces - some grotesquely preening themselves. Suddenly: Herry shifts his weight and accidently drops his flashlight.

HERRY

Oh-oh.

But nothing happens. The birds continue preening.

HERRY (CONT'D)

(whispered sigh of relief)

O-kay then...

He takes a step forward. As he does - an enormous SHADOW crosses him. He looks up. Herry's POV: The MOTHER BIRD. Meters high, beak like a scythe, talons like buzz-saws. She rears her head and...SQWAAAAAAkkkk!!!! Her cry is taken up by her offspring - echoing deafeningly round the Marsh. Then, as one - hundreds of black eyes, shift their menacing gaze towards the three "intruders"...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. BELOW MAIN CIRCUS TENT -- NIGHT

Crawling on their bellies - Jay and Theresa scramble closer to the light. Over their PMR's, all that can be heard is static.

THERESA

Looks like we're on our own...

Jay grips his SWORD tighter.

They've squeezed under a thick, heavy cross-beam.

SUDDENLY: A BLADE slices through the beam between them like butter - the two pieces crash down towards their heads. Moving like lightning, Theresa and Jay roll out of the way.

CRONUS (O.S.)

...So nice of you to join us, we've been expecting you!

Jay and Theresa look up: It's Cronus, towering over them, SICKLE, glinting in the shaft of light.

JAY

(inching away)

Likewise Cronus - it's always a delight.

CRONUS

Such a pity your *other* young chums aren't here.

(malevolent grin)

But I've got a feeling they're being - 'entertained'- somewhere else.

THERESA

- We figured, you would be behind all this.

CRONUS

(false modesty)

Well, I can't take ALL the credit. It's Melampus who *really* has a way with our "feathered friends".

He steps back towards Melampus and the birds. The birds now straining to be let loose on Theresa and Jay.

CRONUS (CONT'D)

...And I'd love to offer you an hors
d'ouvres or something, but I'm rather
anxious to get on with - DESTROYING
YOU!

He raises his SICKLE. The TWO BIRDS Melampus is
holding take to the air. They spin and swoop
downwards on the Titans, talons flashing. But Theresa
is suddenly there in front of them - waving her hands
elaborately like some Vegas Magician. Confused, the
birds hover for a moment - jabbing the air with
their beaks.

CRONUS (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Surely not anoher pathetic display
of "kung-fu-ey, chop-suey!?"

JAY

Theresa...!

With a flourish, Theresa folds her hands - opens
them - revealing: TWO DOVES.

CRONUS

Very impressive, but they won't
help...

The Doves take flight. Unable to resist - the two
Stymphalian Birds rocket after them, zooming in from
both sides. Theresa throws her arms wide, fingers
splayed, and just as suddenly - the Doves VANISH.
The two Symphalians crash head on. There's a
PHWOOOP! As they explode in a cloud of metal
feathers.

Cronus and Melampus look on, stunned. Theresa winks
at Jay proudly.

JAY

Now what?

THERESA

(shaking her head)

Um - actually, that's the only new
trick I've worked out.

CRONUS

(snapping back)

- Kill them!!!

Melampus SHOUTS a command and ALL the Stymphalian Birds rise as one, bearing down on Theresa and Jay...

CUT TO:

INT. VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN TOP/MARSH -- CONTINUOUS

With the Mother Bird's BEAK inches from his head-
Odie falls backwards - activating the SONIC
BLASTER...BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!.

Even as he rolls backwards, he directs the 'sound
spray' around everything in sight. The 'wave' hits
the Mother Bird and her brood full-on. For a moment,
it has a marked effect: MOTHER BIRD staggers
backwards, screaming...the OFFSPRING, 'craw' out in
pain, their cries echoing round the Marsh.

ODIE

All-RIGHT!!

BUT, just as suddenly: The effect wears off - the
sound wave somehow losing all its power.

THE birds are - PEEVED. The Mother Bird rears around
again towards Odie and "Squawks" out a command to
her Young Ones. The Stypmphalians rise into the
air, going in for the kill...

Frantically, Odie activates the Blaster again.
Nothing. Anad again. Nothing. He stands looking
dumbly up at the glistening beak of the Mother
Bird...and is suddenly bowled over by Herry.

HERRY

(Pushing Odue in front
of him: To All)

Let's get out of here!

But it's too late. The rescuers are now the hunted -
and they're in the fight of their lives....

MONTAGE OF INDIVIDUAL STRUGGLES:

- Atlanta: Manages to nail three brds with her laser
wrist crossbow, but still they keep coming. She
finds herself wedged between two rocks. An egg
hatches behind her - the hatchling crawling out,
beak flashing - she nails that one too...

- Archie in his own 'ballet' with the birds...spining, falling, dodging - hitting his target time and time again, but he's getting overwhelmed by sheer numbers...

-Herry: First, braining the diving birds with huge rocks, finally - resorting to punching and kicking anything that swoops near...

- Neil: Back in the crevise AGAIN, making feeble attempts of his own to kick and punch at anything that sticks its beak in...

- And Odie - just running wildly therough the marsh, frantically trying to reconfigure the Blaster as the birds dive towards him...

Finally: Odie finds shelter between two rocks, and punches in a new code for the Blaster. For a moment, a look of triumph. But the smile is wiped from his face when he looks up: The MOTHER BIRD again, right over his head. And everything about her movement says - THIS time it's personal.

ODIE

Oh-oh.

MOTHER BIRD

AWAwwwwwwWWWWWWWAGGGGGHHHHH!

Her meter long beak, cuts through the dank air towards his head. But he raises the Blaster and fires. And it's like the hair is being ripped from his head...

A brain- -numbing SCHRILL vibrates 'round the cavern. Instinctively, all the Titans hit the deck, clapping hands over ears.

The BIRDS wheel widely, screaming obscene squawks - the sound wave unbearable for them. The MOTHER BIRD, crashes backwards through the mud - head rolling. Odie hits her with another blast. She spreads her enormous wings and charges him.

HERRY

Odie....!!

But Odie fires again: It's too much - she staggers back, then spins on the spot - finding no escape.

Instantly, the birds turn on each other. Metal beaks and talons ripping into metal feathers. And suddenly - like a swarm of bees - the Offsprings COVER the MOTHER BIRD - ripping into her...

She SCREAMS IN PAIN.

SOUND TRANSITION: THE PAINFUL SCREAM OF THE 'CIRCUS' BIRDS...

CUT TO:

INT. BELOW MAIN CIRCUS TENT -- CONTINUOUS

Jay and Theresa, back to back - fighting the remaining Stymphalian Birds. Jay slicing the air with deadly accuracy, Theresa turning any piece of sharp wood she can find, into a deadly martial arts weapon - but the birds are getting the better of them. Till suddenly -

These Birds two TURN ON EACH OTHER:

Horrified, Cronus turns to Melampus.

CRONUS
Fool - do something!!

Melampus shouts a command - but is suddenly knocked flying by a diving Bird.

Enraged, Cronus raises his sickle and steps into the flailing birds - slicing at them.

CRONUS (CONT'D)

(to Jay)
I have suffered your interference
for too long, Titan!

He swings the SICKLE. As he does - the birds turn on HIM. He collapses under their weight.

CRONUS (CONT'D)
Arghhhhhhh!

And, pinned by countless Talons. The Stymphalain Birds carry him away -

An undulating cloud of black, spiralling up through the center of the Tent....

CUT TO:

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE MOUNTAINS -- MOMENTS LATER

- The same birds carrying Cronus like an undignified sack of potatoes -

CUT TO:

INT. VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN TOP/MARSH

- The Mother Bird, crashing into the Marsh under the weight of her ravenous children - and the Marsh, bubbling, swirling - OPENING UP - swallowing the Mother Birds and all the Stymphalain Birds in one....as that happens:

CUT TO:

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE MOUNTAINS -- CONTINUOUS

Cronus's birds squawk in madness/pain - and whirl off into the black night - leaving Cronus to PLUMMET to earth.

SPINING ANGLE ON CRONUS tumbling in the dark.

CRONUS

NOOOOOOOO0000!

CUT TO:

INT. BELOW MAIN CIRCUS TENT -- CONTINUOUS

A GROAN in the darkness: Jay and Theresa spin round - alert, ready to fight again. But into the light stumbles...Mephisto, the circus performer, no longer in a trance. Battered and bruised - he looks around at the mess.

MEPHISTO

(confused)

...Did I miss the Matinee?

THERESA

Yeah - but don't worry - the show 'killed' anyway...

She winks at Jay, who smiles weakly back.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEEP FOREST - DAWN

The forest awakening at dawn. Pale shafts of sunlight through the trees: Something like a BEAR seems to be CRASHING through the undergrowth: Suddenly whatever it is - steps into OPENING: It's CRONUS, covered with 'forest debris' from his fall. He hacks at the tree limbs with his sickle, grunting audibly.

SFX - BIRDS SINGING

He looks up: Two DOVES coo down at him from a high limb. He looks at them - his face boiling red...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CIRCUS MAIN TENT -- EVENING

CENTRE RING: A troupe of CLOWNS is performing a traditional slap-stick routine: Lots of running around with huge buckets of wallpaper PASTE - tripping on planks, etc. The capacity CROWD is lapping it up.

WE PAN along the FRONT ROW: ALL the TITANS are there - having a thoroughly good time...except: We STOP at Neil, who's scribbling furiously in a large, slick NOTEBOOK. Theresa notices this.

THERESA

Neil - what are you doing?

NEIL

(not looking up from writing)

Well, I've been thinking. With my encyclopedic knowledge of "fashion and lifestyle", it's ridiculous me handing out little tit-bits of advise to Archie here and there. So - here it is...

He turns to the surprised Archie next to him.

NEIL (CONT'D)

...ALL your fashion faults - and how to correct them - in one convenient volume -

He goes to hand it to Archie, but Atlanta snatches it away.

ATLANTA

That's enough Neil. No MORE lessons!

She tosses the notebook over the side, shoves Neil's PEN into his shirt breast pocket.

ATLANTA (CONT'D)

I think Archie is just fine the way he is.

At this, Archie blushes - so does Atlanta.

NEIL

Fine. Okay - well...that's the LAST time I ever give free advise to a fashion victim!

He turns back to the SHOW: His eyes WIDE with sudden TERROR.

Neils POV: Two terrifying 'Stephen King: type clowns on little BICYCLES - carrying an enormous BUCKET of wallpaper paste - thunder towards him. They hit a PLANK - the bucket rises in the air right over Neil's head -

NEIL (CONT'D)

(recoiling in horror)

No - my linen shirt!!!

- And empties...shredded pieces of white paper over him. The crowd goes wild.

Neil stands and takes a bow. The crowd roars with laughter. Neil takes this as meaning "they love me" and bows again. More laughter. Suddenly - Theresa is tugging at his knee. She's pointing at his shirt. He glances down: A large BLACK ink spot is spreading across his beloved shirt.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Oh, no!

He scowls at Atlanta. Atlanta shrugs.

FADE OUT

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