

Chimera

Lydia Harlow

Lightning flashed through the sky. The rain fell, plastering the hair to Clarisse's face. Up on Half-blood hill, a giant creature with three heads, one a lion, one a goat, and one a giant serpent was wreaking havoc. "What's that?!?" asked a frightened voice to Clarisse's right. She turned and saw Zoe Elpis, a new arrival to Camp Half-blood, Ellis, a member of the Ares cabin, and Malcolm Pence, head counselor to the Athena cabin.

"That," Clarisse responded, "is a chimera."

"How do we kill it?" Zoe asked.

"Well, Bellaphona killed it by flying above it on a Pegasus and shooting arrows at him," answered Malcolm.

"We'll do the same. Zoe, go get Kayla from the Apollo cabin. Malcolm, get the pegasi ready. Ellis, get the chariot and meet me at the pegasi stables." Clarisse said, before racing to the stables herself. But, as she was passing the forge, a huge roar sounded behind her, and she turned and saw a huge burst of flame shooting out of the chimera's mouth. Suddenly, Clarisse's mind flashed back to another chimera, on a day she'd rather forget, the day that she first came to Camp Half-Blood.

She'd been only 8 years old when she first had noticed all the monsters. They had been appearing everywhere, at her school, in the grocery store, even in her neighborhood! She couldn't understand why her mother couldn't see them! However, she knew she wasn't the only kid in her school to see the monsters. There was a girl whose name was Ása, who Clarisse was sure could see them.

Clarisse remembered a time when she'd seen what she now knew was a venti. She had watched Ása look at it and pull a dagger out of her pocket before their teacher had come and whisked them back to the classroom.

Life had continued that way for almost a month, Clarisse seeing monsters and making excuses to avoid them. That is, until the day Gleeson Hedge arrived. He came under the pretense of being a gym teacher, and Clarisse and Ása thought he was normal, until a time when a sort of half-bird half-human creature (Clarisse later learned that it was a harpy) appeared! Clarisse saw Ása draw out the dagger, but before the harpy could attack, Coach Hedge hit it over the head with his baseball bat.

Before Clarisse could make sense of what she'd seen, and come up with a suitable excuse for walking backward away from the creature, Coach Hedge beckoned her and Ása over to him. She walked slowly toward him and when he spoke it was in a quiet, low tone, almost a

whisper. "Meet me in my office." Clarisse and Ása shared a glance before walking out of the gym and into Coach Hedge's office. The room was extremely bare, with only a desk, a few chairs, and a small filing cabinet for decoration.

"Have a seat." Coach Hedge walked in behind them, making Ása jump. "I know you two saw the harpy back there for what it was." Then he proceeded to explain that they were demi-gods, which meant they had one mortal parent and one godly one. He also said they had to travel to Camp Half-Blood, which was all the way in New York.

"Alright. When do we leave?" asked Ása.

"Right now. It's best if we go before more monsters come."

So they left, traveling in cars, trains, and even on boats, making their way across the country. As they traveled, Clarisse and Ása grew closer together, until they felt almost like sisters.

As they journeyed, they saw many monsters, such as Anemoi, a sphinx, harpies, even a hydra, but none as deadly as the one they saw right as they were nearing camp. When they were getting out of the car, a giant, three-headed chimera appeared.

It raced towards them, fire shooting out of one of its mouths, burning their car. Then, it turned, its three heads moving in unison, to face Clarisse. She screamed as it took a breath, and fire shot out of its mouth, but suddenly, it stopped. Clarisse looked around, wondering what had made the beast stop, and saw Ása, her dagger plunged deep into the chimera's chest. Clarisse ran towards Ása, but she was already dead. The chimera's fire had killed her.

Clarisse heard another roar, clearing her mind from her flashback. She knew she had to stop the chimera from destroying the camp before anyone else died.