

Nika was born to a loving father in the suburbs of Chicago. Her father, a former Marine, worked with scientists at the nearby bio lab. He had done well in the Marines before settling down. 6'3 and built like a tight end, Kyle Burns was an intimidating man. Not only was he strong and fast, he was crazy smart. Top of his class, he had a bright future ahead of him. He had Served 7 years before moving to Chicago. He had worked at the lab when he met Nika's mom. She was working at the lab with him for a short time and somehow they had fallen in love. A year later, Nika came along. But what Kyle didn't know until after Nika was born was that Nika's mom wasn't just anybody. She was the Greek goddess Athena. She had explained that she couldn't stay and that he would have to look after their infant daughter. No matter how hard he pleaded, she wouldn't stay. So, he raised Nika by himself. Nika grew up thinking her mom had died after she was born. Nika's father tried his best to raise the rambunctious girl who was super smart. She was also not afraid of anything. She would come home from school with bruises and sometimes a bloody nose from fights she would get in. She wouldn't let anyone belittle her. Her dad admired that in her but he tried to show her that she needed to keep her cool. She tried her best, for her dad. The days she would come home battered and bruised became less and less. At this time, her dad met a woman through mutual friends. She was nice enough and, like Nika's dad, had lost her spouse. Except hers had really died. Nika was 8 when her dad married the woman, Shannon. Shannon had moved in with them. Nika liked her but preferred her dad. Shannon also had a kid. A boy who was thirteen, Walter. The first time he and Nika had met, they kept their distance. But gradually, they became best friends. Nika loved having someone to hang out with who would play games she liked. They would spend hours together. It was unusual for a thirteen year old to spend that much time with a 8 year old. But nevertheless, Walter always made time for Nika. They would play catch, poker(not for real money obviously), and even watch sports together. Nika grew up with a built in best friend. But, life people must learn that all good things come to an end. Nika's stepmom fell ill with cancer when she was ten and passed away. Walter took this hard. Nika still had her dad but Walter may as well have been an orphan. He slumped into a depression and started to be more distant. Nika took this hard. But her dad took this especially hard. He had lost two spouses. He too sunk into depression but unlike Walter, he turned to alcohol

Instead of isolation. He would be out a lot, leaving ten year old Nika alone at home with Walter who would shut himself in his room. Nika got into more fights but started to keep to herself more. A year passed and things only worsened. Her dad would come home drunk and angry. She would have to wait till morning to talk to her dad, the one person who had been with her the whole time. The one she could always talk to and trust. The one that would take her in his strong arms and hold her close and whisper to her that it would be ok. She soon learned that she had to rely on her smarts, quick thinking, and smart mouth to survive. She developed a system over the next half year. She would go to school and use her quick mouth to avoid bullies and fights, then use her smarts to make it through school, then run home and convince Walter to help her with her homework to slowly work him out of his shell. Then she would hide in her room and wait for her dad to calm down then help him. Little Nika soon grew up. As her 12th birthday approached, things were slightly better. Her dad had eased off the drinking a bit but he still did. Walter had started to come out of his shell and even agreed to play catch with Nika again after school even though he was more reserved. She was walking home one day, her 12th birthday that day. She looked forward to her dad having a she ready and waiting for her and Walter with his goofy smile ready to sing happy birthday. Nika smiled at the thought and walked up to her house. She hesitated. Something felt... off. The house seemed to be deserted. She walked in. The house was pitch black. Walter should be back by now. She thinks. Walter? Dad? Are you guys home? She asks into the empty house. She heard a faint shuffling and froze. We didnt have a dog. She thought. She looked around for a weapon of some sort and grabbed a nearby pen. Out of the darkness came, her dad? Dad? She asked as he shuffled toward her. She backed up, fearing he was in one of his moods. But he looked fine, in fact, more alive. He pulled her into a hug. Hey a baby. Happy Birthday. He says. Nika was shocked. She hugged her dad back. Thanks Dad. Where's Walter? She asked with hope growing in her. He sighed. Walter... he.. he got into decided that he wanted to be alone. He says. Ok, but its my birthday so Ill go get him. She says but her dad doesnt let her go. No baby, he's not here. Nobody can find him. He's just...gone. He says. Her heart stopped. W-what do you mean goNe? I ask him. He shakes his head. He... had to go somewhere to clear his head. He hasn't been himself since Shannon...

He stopped. His voice hitching. Dad. Dad look at me. She says and he looks her in her eyes. Where. Is. Walter? She asks. I dont know. He disappeared with a note that didnt give me any details. He sighed and handed me the note. I already filed a missing persons report And some of my Marine friends are looking for him but theres been no sign of him. He says. Tears were streaming down her face. Her best friend, gone. Can I see the note? She asks. He nods and hands it to her. She opens the crumpled piece of printer paper. She reads the scribbled note, concentrating on every letter.

Dear Dad and Nika,

Im sorry that I have to leave. I just need to get away and think. I dont know when Ill be back. Thanks for looking after me. And happy birthday Nika sorry I wasn't there for you. Love,

Walter

She crumpled the note up and tears ran down her face. Her dad reached for her to give her another hug but she punched him away. No. He can't be gone. HE JUST CANT BE! She said, her voice rising. Nik- wait! Her dad yelled as she ran out of the house and to the garage. She grabbed her helmet and bike and pedaled away as fast as she could. Her dad yelled after her for her to come back but she ignored him and kept going. She rode and rode until she couldnt anymore. She stopped under a bridge and cried. Not only for her brother, but for Her best friend. She guessed they were the same thing but... it was just too painful. Even to breathe. She sobbed until she couldnt anymore. She just sat there as The cars went over the bridge causing the bridge to rumble. Nika didn't know what time it was but it was dark by the time something moved nearby causing her to jump. She looked around and grabbed a nearby branch. It'll have to do. She thinks and faces the unknown foe. It walks out of the bushes and Nika attacks with her stick. It grunts as she attacked. Nika stop! The voice says. She stopped. Walter?! He said as her brother brushed splinters off his sweatshirt. He grimaced at the new bruises. Yep its me. He says. Nika ran and wrapped in a hug. Woah woah. Easy there. He said and hugged her back. I missed you. Nika says. Me too sis. He says. She pushes him and punches him in the gut. He doubles over. What was that for?! He asks. You left me! Alone! Without anyway to talk to you! And on my birthday! Jerk! Nika yelled at him. Fair enough but I had to. He says and stumbles to his feet. Why? She asks,

Anger taking over. He hesitated. Why Walter?! She yells. Because monsters are after me ok?! I was trying to protect you! He yells finally. Monsters?! You got to be joking. That's the lamest excuse I've ever heard. She tells him with mad grin. He looks at her. Its true! I swear on my Babe Ruth rookie card. He says and Nika pauseS. He loved that card more than anything, maybe even more then Nika. Ok. She says and looks at him with her arms folded. Why are there monsters after you? Nika asks. I know this sounds weird but I'm a demigod. A Greek one. And monsters love to hunt me down and Try to kill me! He sayS. A demigod?! I know it should've sounded absurd but somewhere, deep inside of me, it made sense. I hated that. So wait, like you mean to tell me that you are related to a Greek god? And their real? she asks. He nods. She laughed hysterically. Your kidding right? This is all some joke that you made up to prank me on my birthday? Very funny Walter. She says. It's not a joke Nika, especially you. Your a halfblood like me. That's why I needed to find you. He says. The monsters Are after you too. Youve come of age. They're going to come for you and there's only one place you can go to be safe. That's where I was going. He says trying to convince me. That same cord of seeing that as truth deep in me came up and I tried to squash it. Nika, there is oNly one place where we can both be safe. And that's camp halfblood. He says and looks me in the eye. wait, your telling me that a Greek goddesses is my mother?! I ask him. Yes. He says bluntly. All the new information in my head ran through over and over. But pieces of the puzzle were starting to fit together. My dad had always told me that my real mother had died when I was born which in theory was the perfect cover up. But one thing still puzzled me. Why wouldnt he tell me? If its that dangerous then why keep it from me and not send me to this supposed safe place? She askS. He shrugs. I dont know. But you were too young to go so maybe that's why. He said. Ok..... so, where is this camp? She asks. Long Island New York. He says. I gaped at him. That's like 789 miles away! I tell him. He sighed in frustration. I know! Why do you think I've been saving up? I have more than enough to get me to New York by train. He says. I do have enough to get both of us to New York but we'll have to walk or hitch hike to camp from there. he says and thinks. Ok, then lets go. She tell him. Really? Your taking this surprisingly well. He said. Yeah, I mean it does and doesnt make logical sense at the same time but if you swear on your Babe Ruth card than I have to take

Your word for it. She tells him. He smiles. Thanks sis. Now, lets get going before something finds us. He says. We both run to the Chicago train station and bought the tickets. The ticket master was suspicious of us but after we explained our clever well thought out lie he let us through. we boarded the train and set off. It was pretty uneventful on the train ride. We hardly talked. Though he did tell me that he had figured out that he was a halfblood right before Shannon died. She had told him on her death bed and he had researched all he could on it. He was lucky no monsters had gotten him which was unusual apparently. He didnt know who was his dad but he had some theories. I think Apollo or Hermes but im not sure. He says. (I changed pov to Nika's head so it doesnt get confusing). I kinda zoned out a bit, still trying to figure everything out. I too wondered who my godly parent was. It was obviously a goddess since I was 100% sure my dad was my real dad. It was still dark outside when we got to New York. The city was busy even though it was like 1 in the morning. We avoiding people as much as we could and kept going. I was so tired. We kept walking though. Walter had his phone that gave us directions. It took us about an hour to just Get out of the city. We still had like a three hour walk/run to the forest near the camp. We took a break after getting out of the city and I instantly collapsed. Maybe we should stay here for a bit. Walter says and looks around. Okay, sounds good. I say and I pass out. I was shaken awake by Walter, the sun was setting and I started up. Why did you let me sleep for so long?! I ask him, angry at him and myself. He holds a hand over my mouth and I was tempted to bite him. He put a finger to his mouth signaling for silence. He points to massive figures about a mile away. Huge mishappen shapes. Cyclops, how'd they find us? Walter asks himself. Wait those are cyclops? I ask him and try to get a better look at the things. They were each 10-12 feet tall and had either dreads or no hair. They had arms and legs as thick as trees and had one massive ugly eye. Two had horns on their head. We need to move, we can try to hitch hike soon. He says and we start off at a jog. We run as far as we could before I needed to catch my breath. Walter was a lot more athletic than I was so he could go farther. I mean, if you call being the best baseball player on the team and a track star super athletic then that was Walter. I tried to breath. When I had caught my breath enough we continued on. We ran until Walter explained that we could find a car once we got to the next rode. We ran until we came upon the road and

Waited for a car to pass by. It took almost an hour for a car to finally stop and ask if we needed a ride. It was a man in his late 40s with a kind face. Yes that would be wonderful! Walter tells him and we hop in the back of his truck. So where are yall of to? He asks in a southern accent. I guessed he was from out of state. Can you drop us off near here? Its near our camp we're staying at for the summer. Walter says with a smile and shows him the GPS location. The man nods. Sure, that's on the way to where I'm going. Buckle up! He says and we smile at our luck and buckle. The mans name was Jack and he was on his way to meet his sister who lived up here. He asked where we were from and I almost blew our cover. We're from downstate, we are going to this camp but our grandparents dropped us off at the wrong place and had already left when we realized it. Walter says. Huh, then why didnt you just call them? He asks. Walter paused, not knowing what to say. Our grandparents leave their phones at their house sometimes and we figured that was why they weren't answering. I say and Walter sighs in relief. Jack nodded. Well, im glad I found yall then. We drive for the next 20 minutes engaged in a friendly conversation with Jack. He had country music on in the background and I started to like it. Jack was from Mississppi and was visiting his sister who was having her third child. We'll this is your stop. He says and pulls over. Thank you Jack, we would've been in big trouble without you. Walter says. No problem, thank you for keeping this trip exciting. He says and pulls out with a smile and a wave. Once he was out of sight we head the last mile to camp. We should be close now. Walter says and we both start to get excited to have finally made it. We crest a small hill and I point out tiny pinpricks of light in the forest. That's it! We did it Nika! Walter says and we start down the hill. We were halfway down when the ground rumbled. What's happening? I ask Walter. he turns around and turns ghost white. I look back to see the cyclops from earlier running toward us with clubs raised and bellowing for our blood. RUN!!! Walter yells at me and force my tired legs into a dead sprint. The beasts were right behind us. Run for the camp! We'll be safe there! He yells and we sprint through the forest toward the light. Every second seemed to bring the brutes closer. I did the calculations in my head. We weren't gonna make it. The monsters were too fast. WE HAVE TO LOSE THEM IN THE TREES THEN CIRCLE BACK! Walter yells and we weave in and out of trees. The cyclops seemed to get farther away and we felt we could circle back. We

Ran toward the light again but crashed into something. It was a cyclops. Its beady eye locked on me and Walter and it raised its club to kill us. I was frozen in place. I tried to move but my brain didn't work. In slow motion, the club came down. Just before it hit me, I felt something ram me out of the way. Black dotted my vision as I hit a tree. I groaned and looked to see Walter with a sad smile on his face in the place I was not a millisecond ago. NO! I yelled as the club smashed into him and he fell to the ground, limp and lifeless. WALTER!!! I yelled in grief and sobbed. The cyclops yelled in triumph and turned to me. Just when it was going to charge me, a spear blurred past me and buried itself in the thing's beefy shoulder. It roared in anger and pain and crumpled to golden dust. Over here! I heard someone yell and a group of people in armor rushed over with swords and spears glinting in torch light. Someone pointed at me but the grief and exhaustion kicked in and I passed out. I don't remember anything till the next morning. I woke up in a white tent where a blonde haired girl and a guy in a white doctor's robe stood. She's awake! The guy said and they both walked over. I didn't want people. My only friend in the whole world was gone, really gone this time. The girl, who had striking grey eyes looked at me. She put a hand on my arm. Hey, that was very brave of you last night. She says. I felt tears brim my eyes. Hey hey it's ok. Everything will be ok. You're here now ok? She says and sits down on the cot next to me. Annabeth, they need you over at the Big House for a meeting. The guy said. She rolled her eyes. Can you tell them that I'm in the middle of something. She asks. He nods and runs off. What's your name kid? She asks. Nika. I croak out. Nika, I like that name. She says. I'm Annabeth, daughter of Athena. She says. Annabeth. The daughter of Athena part struck that deep cord in me again and an owl screeched out of nowhere. A grey glow shone above and an owl hovered over me. Annabeth gasped and muttered under her breath. What is that? I ask. She laughs. That means you're my little sister. She says. Me? A daughter of Athena? I mean it made sense now and all but still. Come on, it's time to show you around camp. She says and helps me up. Two weeks later

I had adjusted to camp life and learned who Annabeth really was. Apparently she was different to me than the rest of the camp besides her boyfriend Percy. Being an Athena kid was nice. They had a service for Walter. It was one of the hardest things ever. After that I really settled in. I thought it was going to be

A nice uneventful summer. Boy was I wrong. Sure it was fun and awesome but... crazy and heart wrenching. And it all started with a girl like me who stumbled into campe just like me. She was quiet and traumatized but Annabeth treated her like she did me. Her name was Lura. Hey! I told her and wrapped her in a hug as she climbed the stair to our cabin. She flinched but then returned my hug. I'm Nika and I just know we're gonna be best friends! I tell her and she smiled. I bet this is the start of something. I think as I show her our room

The end! U all know the rest! Sorry its so ling but yk me! Dedicated to @cabin3!

