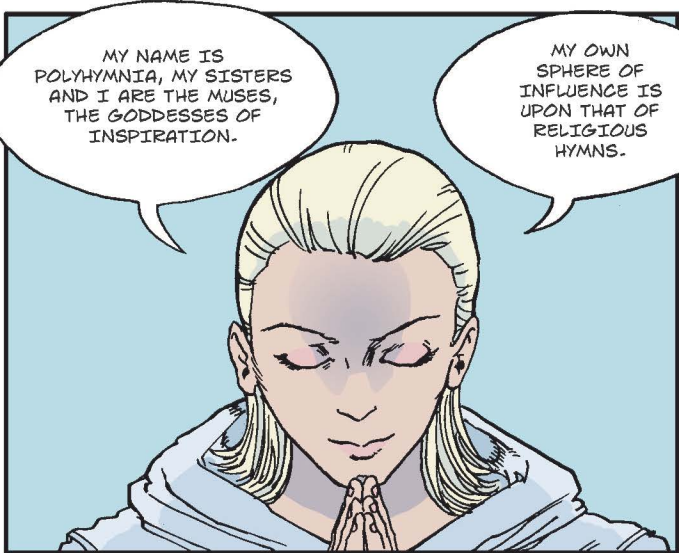


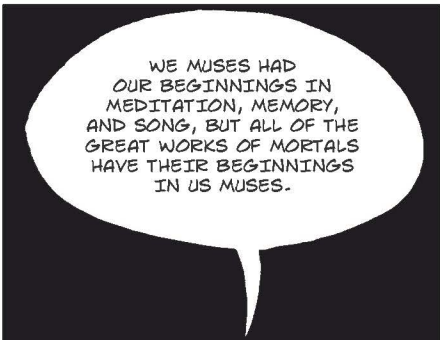


GREETINGS, PILGRIM. I SENSE THAT YOU HAVE COME HERE TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE GREAT GOD APOLLO, HE WHO SHINES ABOVE US ALL.

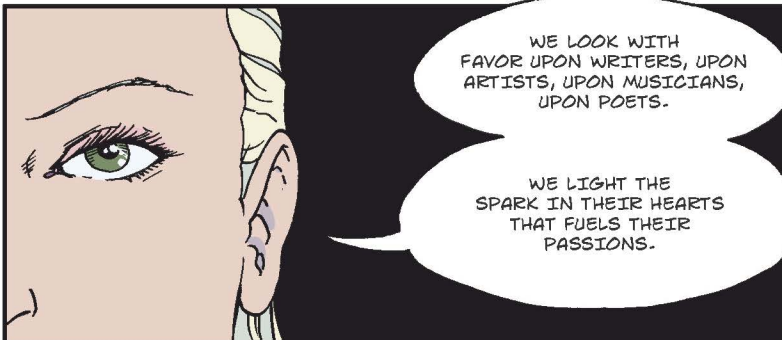


MY NAME IS POLYHYMNIA, MY SISTERS AND I ARE THE MUSES, THE GODDESSES OF INSPIRATION.

MY OWN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE IS UPON THAT OF RELIGIOUS HYMNS.



WE MUSES HAD OUR BEGINNINGS IN MEDITATION, MEMORY, AND SONG, BUT ALL OF THE GREAT WORKS OF MORTALS HAVE THEIR BEGINNINGS IN US MUSES.



WE LOOK WITH FAVOR UPON WRITERS, UPON ARTISTS, UPON MUSICIANS, UPON POETS.

WE LIGHT THE SPARK IN THEIR HEARTS THAT FUELS THEIR PASSIONS.



LISTEN NOW AS MY SISTERS AND I CAST ILLUMINATION ON BLESSED APOLLO, HE MOST TREASURED ABOVE ALL OTHER GODS, AND HOW HE CAME TO BE.



IN THE FAR, FAR NORTH, BEYOND THE REACH OF THE NORTH WIND, BOREAS, LIES THE COUNTRY OF HYPERBOREA.

BORDERED BY MOUNTAINS, GUARDED BY GRYPHONS, IT IS THE LAND MOST SACRED TO RADIANT APOLLO, HE WHO SHOOTS FROM AFAR, AND HOME TO HIS MOTHER, GENTLE LETO.



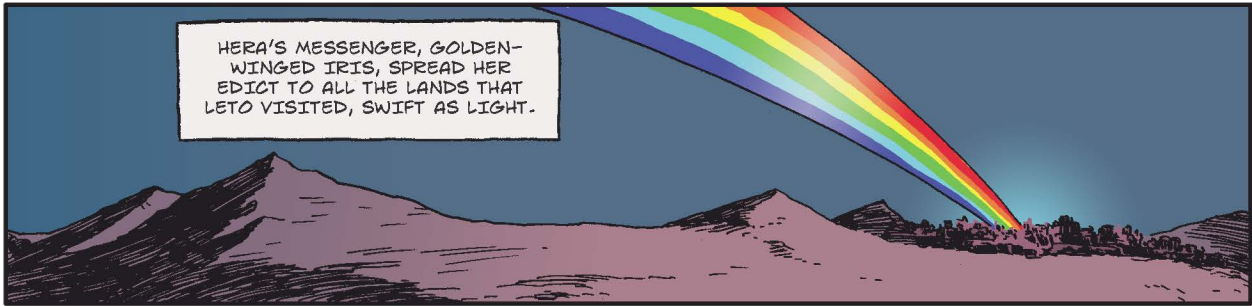
A LOVE OF THE MIGHTY ZEUS, GLORIOUS LETO LOPED OUT OF HYPERBOREA IN THE FORM OF A SHE-WOLF, PREGNANT WITH THE CHILDREN OF THE KING OF THE GODS.



THIS GUISE DID NOT SHIELD HER FROM THE ALL-SEEING GAZE OF HERA, THE WIFE OF ZEUS AND ALL-POWERFUL QUEEN OF THE GODS.



FROM A CONTINENT AWAY, HATEFUL ARES KEPT AN UNENDING WATCH ON THE MOVEMENTS OF LETO AT HIS MOTHER'S BEHEST.



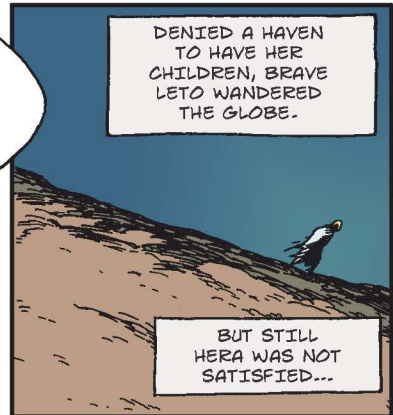
HERA'S MESSENGER, GOLDEN-WINGED IRIS, SPREAD HER EDICT TO ALL THE LANDS THAT LETO VISITED, SWIFT AS LIGHT.



LISTEN TO ME, O INHABITANTS OF EARTH! I TELL YOU OF LETO, HEAVY WITH THE ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN OF ZEUS.

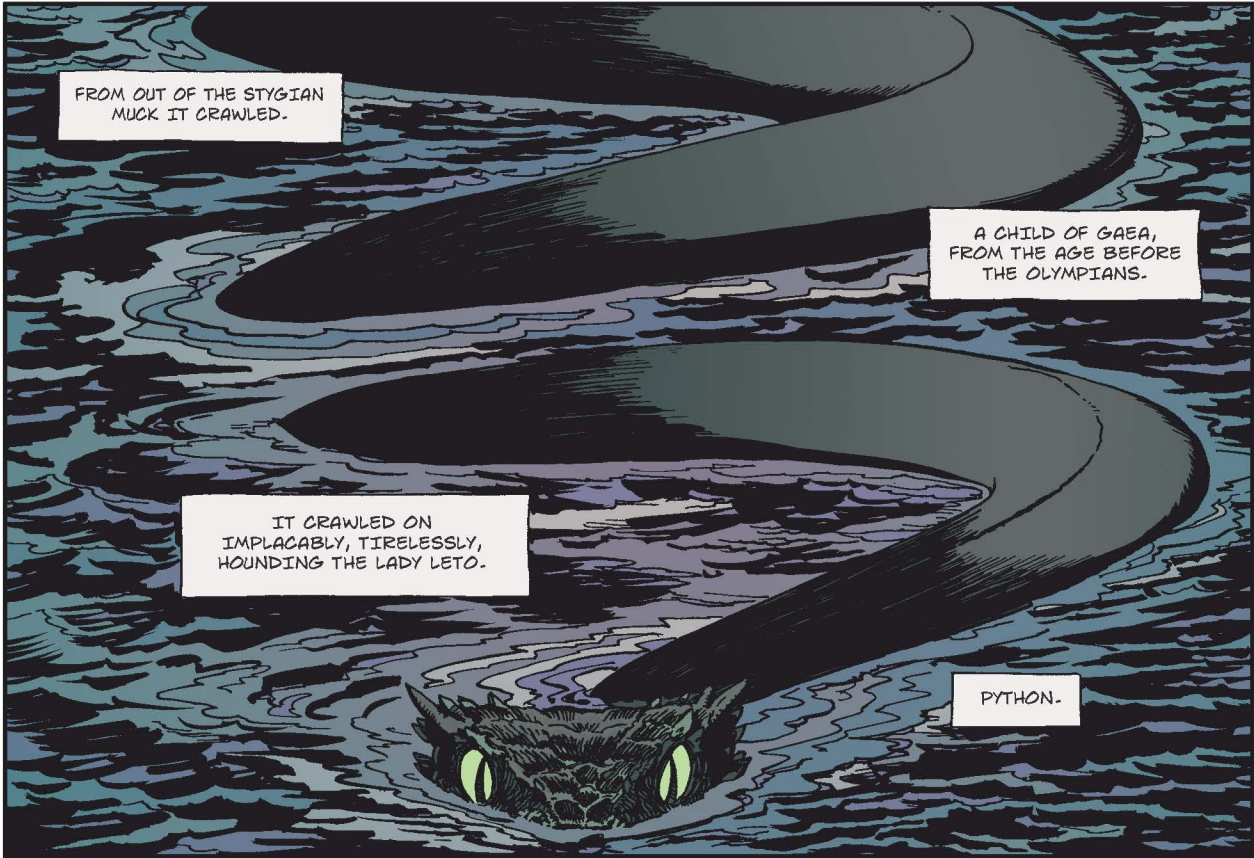


NO SPOT OF DRY LAND, NO TERRA FIRMA, WILL LAY PROTECTION IN WHICH THIS WOMAN, LEST IT RISK THE WRATH OF MY LADY, HERA, QUEEN OF THE GODS.



DENIED A HAVEN TO HAVE HER CHILDREN, BRAVE LETO WANDERED THE GLOBE.

BUT STILL HERA WAS NOT SATISFIED...



FROM OUT OF THE STYGIAN MUCK IT CRAWLED.

A CHILD OF GAEA, FROM THE AGE BEFORE THE OLYMPIANS.

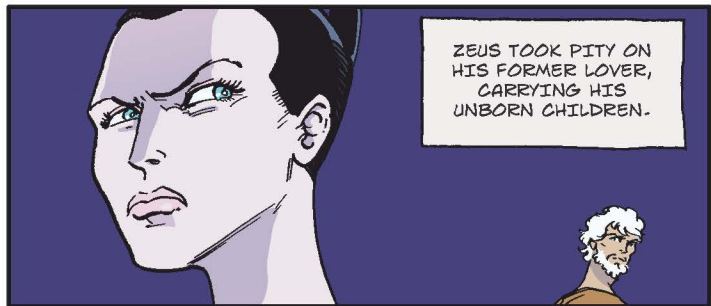
IT CRAWLED ON IMPLACABLY, TIRELESSLY, HOUNDING THE LADY LETO.

PYTHON.

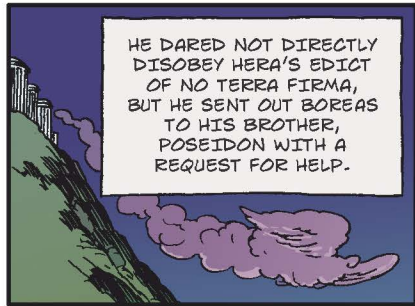


HERA SET THIS MONSTER ON THE HEEL'S OF LETO.

UNABLE TO STOP, UNABLE TO REST, LETO KEPT MOVING, CONSTANTLY.



ZEUS TOOK PITY ON HIS FORMER LOVER, CARRYING HIS UNBORN CHILDREN.

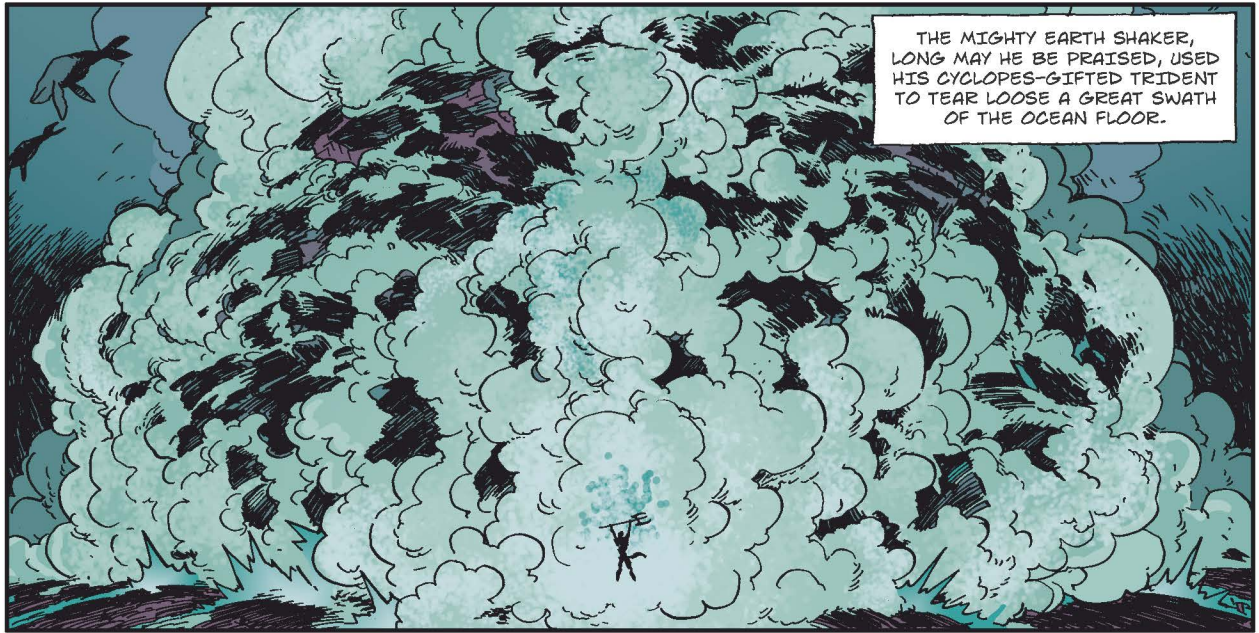


HE DARED NOT DIRECTLY DISOBEY HERA'S EDICT OF NO TERRA FIRMA, BUT HE SENT OUT BOREAS TO HIS BROTHER, POSEIDON WITH A REQUEST FOR HELP.



I HAVE GOT TO GET MY OWN MESSENGER.

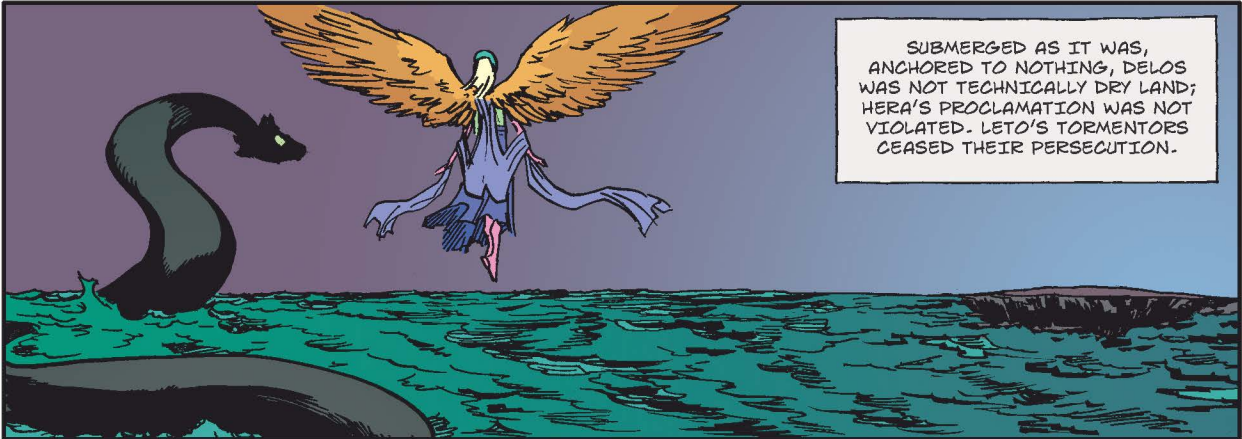




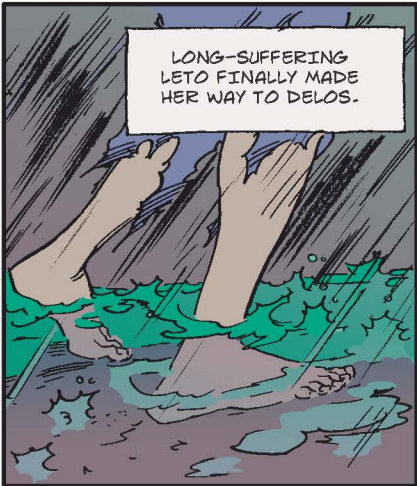


A GIANT FLOATING HUNK OF MUD AND STONE, SUSPENDED JUST BELOW THE OCEAN'S SURFACE.

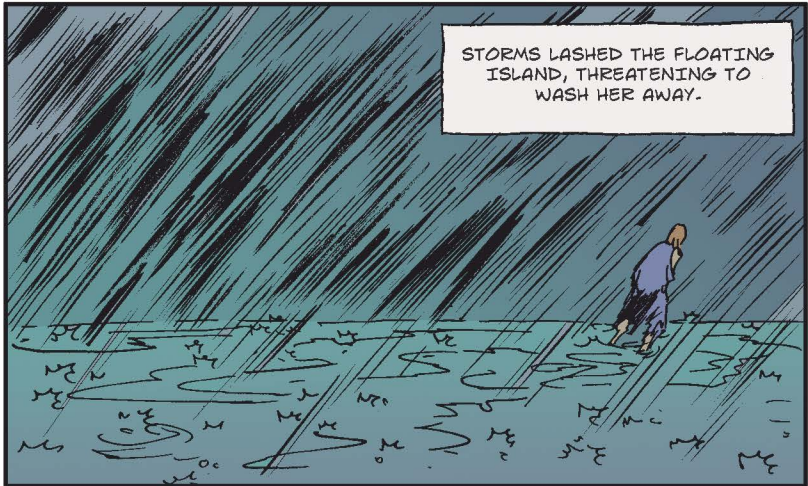
DELOS.



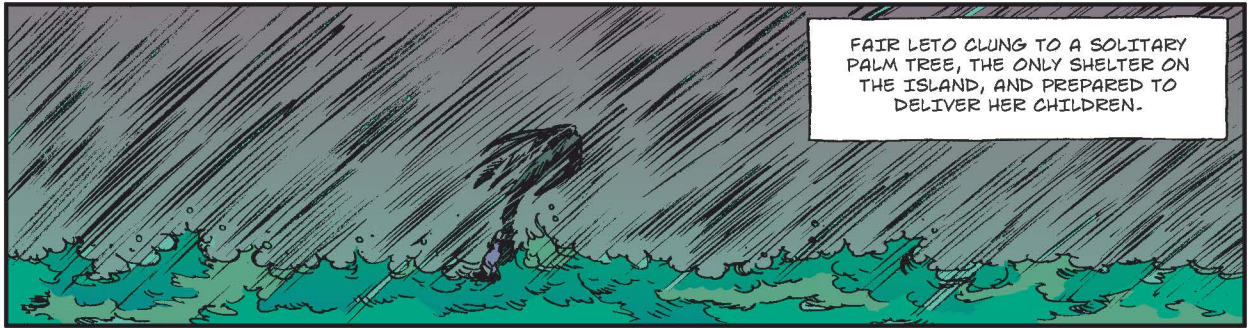
SUBMERGED AS IT WAS, ANCHORED TO NOTHING, DELOS WAS NOT TECHNICALLY DRY LAND; HERA'S PROCLAMATION WAS NOT VIOLATED. LETO'S TORMENTORS CEASED THEIR PERSECUTION.



LONG-SUFFERING LETO FINALLY MADE HER WAY TO DELOS.



STORMS LASHED THE FLOATING ISLAND, THREATENING TO WASH HER AWAY.



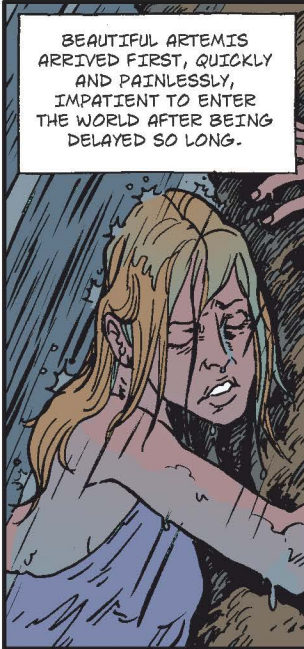
FAIR LETO CLUNG TO A SOLITARY PALM TREE, THE ONLY SHELTER ON THE ISLAND, AND PREPARED TO DELIVER HER CHILDREN.



SHE HAD TO DO THIS ALONE.



HERA EILEITHYIA TURNED HER BACK ON LETO.



BEAUTIFUL ARTEMIS ARRIVED FIRST, QUICKLY AND PAINLESSLY, IMPATIENT TO ENTER THE WORLD AFTER BEING DELAYED SO LONG.



PRECOCIOUS, AS GODS TEND TO BE, ARTEMIS AIDED HER MOTHER IN THE DELIVERY OF HER BROTHER.

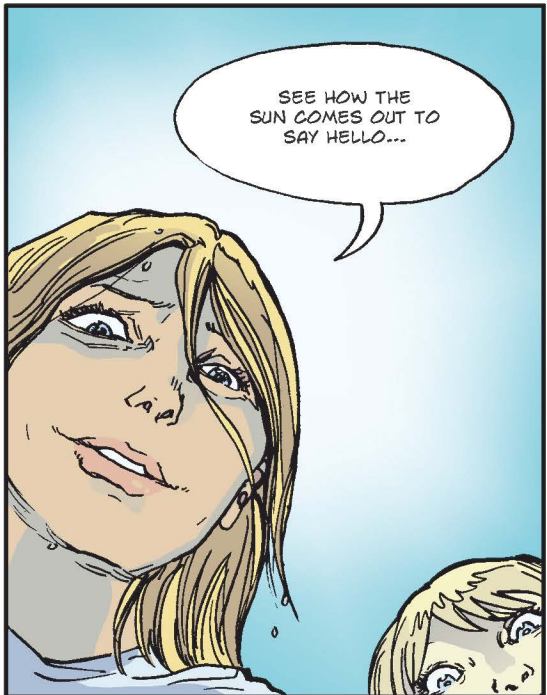
THIS IS WHY, ALTHOUGH A CHILDLESS DEITY, ARTEMIS IS A GODDESS OF CHILDBIRTH.



FOR NINE DAYS, AND NINE NIGHTS, LETO CONTINUED HER LABOR.



UNTIL, FINALLY, THE STORM BROKE. AND ON THAT DAY, AS IF HE KNEW EXACTLY WHEN TO ARRIVE...



SEE HOW THE SUN COMES OUT TO SAY HELLO...