

ILIUM RIDGE

by

Glendenning Cram & Ron Hier

(416) 528-1277

glencram@rogers.com

<http://iliumridge.com>

INTRODUCTION

NARRATOR

(sung)

*I sing, o Goddess,
of the wrath of invincible Achilles.
of the treachery of Agamemnon.
of the love of selfless Briseis.
and the destiny that came
to Ilium Ridge*

*I sing of a war:
maybe 4 years,
or maybe 10,
or maybe since time began.
Someone was shot,
or someone was kidnapped.
Love, land, money, fame,
what does it matter?
Whoever needed an excuse
for war?*

*I sing of three brothers:
Zeus in the sky,
Poseidon in the sea,
Hades down below.
War is but their eternal game
which we below must play forever.*

*I sing of the ultimate battle:
from the blood of the trenches,
to the hell of No Mans Land,
to the high high heights above it
all.
The Battle of Ilium Ridge!*

1. EXT. THE LAKE DISTRICT - DAY

The year: 1917 (in human reckoning).

A World War I military vehicle is driving along the road, surrounded by the spectacular scenery of the English Lakes District. In the driver's seat, a MILITARY POLICEMAN, with Messenger of the Gods HERMES, dressed as a WWI lieutenant, sitting beside him. There is another SOLDIER in the back seat.

2. EXT. THETIS' LAKE - DAY

The vehicle comes to an idyllic lake. There is no sign of habitation, except for a small rowboat tied up to the edge of the lake. The driver parks beside the boat.

Hermes and the soldiers jump out and march straight into the lake, until they are totally submerged.

3. EXT. UNDER THE LAKE - DAY

Hermes and the soldiers continue walking on the lake bed, surrounded by the blue haze of the water. Ahead of them is a quaint old-style stone cottage, walls festooned with seaweed, with marine plants in the garden.

4. INT. THETIS' COTTAGE - DAY

THETIS, an attractive middle-aged sea-nymph, is sitting in her armchair in the cottage. She is embroidering a scene of the marine kingdom. There is a shawl-covered rocking chair opposite her, with its back to the CAMERA.

There is a RAPPING on the front door. Thetis looks up, alarmed.

THETIS
Into the back. Just to be safe.

From the rocking chair a FIGURE IN FEMALE DRESS, seen only from behind, rises silently, runs into the back room and closes the door. Thetis goes to the front door.

5. EXT. THETIS' COTTAGE - DAY

Hermes knocks again. Thetis opens the door.

HERMES
(voice slightly muffled
by the water)
Mrs. Thetis?

THETIS
I think you have the wrong house.

HERMES
I think not. Would Miss Achilleia be
at home?

THETIS
She would not. May I know what
business the Army has with my
daughter?

HERMES
(Turning to the other
soldiers)
Daughter.

They laugh. Hermes turns back to Thetis.

HERMES

That is between, ah, she and I.
Secrets of war, don't you know.
Where is she?

THETIS

She has stepped out. And I really
have no idea where she may be at
present, Mr...

HERMES

Lieutenant. Hermes.

THETIS

Of course, Lieutenant. I will be
sure to let her know you called. If
that is all...

She starts to close the door. Hermes puts out his hand to
stop her.

HERMES

I'm afraid that is not all, Mrs.
Thetis. My orders are to await her
return. However long that takes.

Hermes gestures to the other soldiers, who move out to
either side of the cottage. He starts to push past Thetis
into the cottage. She pushes him back.

THETIS

Do you know who I am?

HERMES

Your... connection with my father
Zeus is not unknown to me. And if I
had to treat every one of his lovers
and bastards with kid gloves, my
usefulness would be seriously
curtailed. But in this case, it
matters not. He has chosen the other
side.

THETIS

(shocked)

Then who has sent you?

HERMES

His brother. Poseidon. And may I
remind you that as a sea-nymph, you
are sworn only to him. If you will
excuse me.

He stares at Thetis. She stares back, then stands aside
wordlessly. He starts to enter, when...

SOLDIER 1

(O.S.)

Up here!

THETIS

No!

She grabs Hermes' arm.

THETIS

I have seen his fate. If he goes
there now...

Hermes gently removes her hand from his sleeve.

HERMES

We can none of us escape our fate.
Not even the Gods.
(tipping his cap)
Good day, madam.

He launches himself upwards. Thetis bursts into tears.

THETIS

(sobbing)

My beautiful baby boy.

6. EXT. THETIS' LAKE - DAY

Hermes' head emerges from the lake. He looks around. The
rowboat is heading away from him across the lake at double
speed. It seems to be rowed by a woman, covered in a long
cape. Hermes SIGHS.

7. EXT. ROWBOAT - DAY

ACHILLES, wearing a woman's dress, face still concealed by
the cape, rows frantically for the opposite shore.

There is a LOUD WHISTLE. Achilles looks around wildly. Nothing. Another WHISTLE. He looks up to see Hermes flying above him, smiling down at the boat. He redoubles his rowing, but Hermes swoops down and plucks the struggling Achilles up into the air by the cape. Achilles tries to wiggle loose, but in vain.

Hermes pulls back Achilles' hood to reveal a handsome young man snarling at him. He looks like a WWI recruiting poster.

HERMES

Miss Achilleia, I presume. If I did not know better, I should say I have made the acquaintance of a handsome woman indeed!

ACHILLES

(in a Geordie accent)

Laugh if you want. I am not going back to that hell.

HERMES

I am afraid you are. When the Gods give an order, mortals cannot but obey. Look down.

Achilles does, and recoils in shock.

8. EXT. THE CHANNEL - DAY

Below Achilles is not the peaceful water of the lake, but a storm-tossed sea. White cliffs and green fields dwindle behind him; ahead, equally green fields, but the far horizon is an evil red glow, punctuated with soundless explosions.

They reach the coast. There is a natural harbour below, where several Achaean battleships lie moored, and a triplane parked in an airfield near by.

HERMES

That robe is most becoming, but I believe a change of outfit is in order.

Achilles' dress becomes a World War I captain's uniform.

Hermes swoops down towards the airfield.

9. EXT. ACHAEAN AIRFIELD - DAY

There is a triplane idling on the runway. A MAN stands facing it.

Hermes alights silently, with Achilles.

HERMES
You'll be needing an aide.
Corporal Patroclus!

PATROCLUS turns, and his face lights up.

PATROCLUS
(in an Irish accent)
Sir!

ACHILLES
(equally delighted)
Pat!

They shake hands.

ACHILLES
How long has it been?

PATROCLUS
Too long. The Kaffiroi campaign,
down in darkest Nubia.

ACHILLES
Worthy foes.

PATROCLUS
But we got 'em in the end. You saved
me there. Twice.

ACHILLES
Any man would have done the same.

PATROCLUS
But only you did. My life is yours.
Always.

He clasps Achilles' shoulder.

HERMES
Let's fly!

10. EXT. THE WESTERN FRONT - JUST BEFORE DAWN

No-man's land, a vast field of mud filled with half-buried corpses and the debris of battle, pock-marked by shell holes, and crossed by miles of barbed wire barriers.

11. EXT. THE ACHAEAN TRENCH - CONTINUOUS

SENTRY 1 is on patrol. His boots make SUCKING SOUNDS as he tramps through the muck. Rats scurry away at the sound of his approach. He ducks round the remains of a rotting arm lodged between sandbags lining the trench walls.

SENTRY 2 comes round a bend in the walls.

SENTRY 1
Bloody cold, innit?

Sentry 2 pulls out a flask, tosses it to Sentry 1. He unscrews it, drinks greedily.

Sentry 2 looks at the horizon. The sun is slowly rising.

Sentry 1 wipes his lips, hands back the flask.

SENTRY 1
Thanks, mate.

SENTRY 2
Hear anything wrong?

SENTRY 1
Just the wind.

SENTRY 2
Thought I heard something else.

SENTRY 1
It ain't the Trouts. They're still
licking their wounds from that last
drubbing we gave 'em.

Sentry 2 looks nervously at no-man's land. No sign of life.

SENTRY 2
They're crafty though... Well, I
best get a move on.

Sentry 2 moves off, leaving Sentry 1 alone. Sentry 1 moves closer to the wall, undoes his fly and starts to urinate.

Suddenly, a SHOT RINGS OUT. Sentry 1 crumples to the ground.

HECTOR, the Trojan hero, tall, muscle-bound, a commanding presence, leads his platoon over the trench wall.

Hector surveys the scene, sees the entry to the barracks room.

HECTOR
Are you with me?

SOLDIERS
In life and in death!

HECTOR
Then follow me, all.

Hector leads his men in a rush on the barracks.

12. INT. BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

The sleeping Achaeans are beginning to stir.

Hector and his men burst in, guns blazing. In ten seconds it's all over. A bloody massacre. No one left alive.

As the Trojans take stock, Sentry 2 rushes in, brandishing a pistol.

Before he can fire, Hector grabs the Sentry's wrist, wrenches his arm out of whack. The Sentry drops his gun.

Hector scoops him up, lifting him off the ground like a rag doll.

HECTOR
You know my name?

SENTRY 2
Hector, son of the bastard Priam.

HECTOR
Very good. I bring a message for your leader.

Hector hurls him to the ground. He pulls a sheet of paper from his tunic and reads.

HECTOR
"Greetings to the mighty General Agamemnon from Field Marshal Priam. Today marks ten years since you came here to die for Menelaus' conniving whore. Helen still warms my son's bed and you will never bring her back..." It goes on. Would you like to hear more?

SENTRY 2
(spits)
I've heard it. Many times.

Hector places the note on the sentry's chest, and pulls out his dagger.

SENTRY 2

Wait, what are you...?

Hector thrusts his knife through the note, pinning it to the sentry's chest.

HECTOR

Let's go, boys.

The Trojans make a speedy retreat.

Sentry 2 raises the silver trident hanging from the chain around his neck.

SENTRY 2

Poseidon, Lord of the Seas... avenge me...

Coughing up blood, gasping for air, he dies.

His last prayer travels up...

13. EXT. THE AIR - DAY

... over the hell of no man's land, up and over the fortress of Ilium Ridge to the fields and mountains beyond, through the snowy peaks, up to...

14. EXT. THE OLYMPICA HOTEL AND SPA - DAY

The hotel is grand, in the 19th century style. It is at the very top of a mighty, snowy mountain: Mount Olympus. The sentry's prayer travels in the great front door...

15. INT. THE OLYMPICA HOTEL AND SPA HALLS - DAY

...through the lobby and hallways, which are thronged with people divine and semi-divine, towards the Gaming Room.

16. INT. THE OLYMPICA HOTEL AND SPA GAMING ROOM - DAY

CAMERA PULLS BACK to back to reveal the image and last prayer of the dying sentry on a holographic map embedded in a large circular table. Placed on the map are markers representing the armies of Achaea/Greece (the Allies) and Ilium/Troy (the Central Powers), with men the pieces in the game. Troy occupies a chunk of ground high on a cliff, while Achaea occupies the land below to the sea. Each side controls a vast network of trenches, with a deadly no-man's land between them.

Seated round the table are brother Gods ZEUS, God of the Skies, POSEIDON, God of the Seas and HADES, God of the Land Below. They are identical copies of one completely normal-looking man, though Zeus wears the regalia and facial hair of German Kaiser Wilhelm II, Poseidon of British King George V, Hades of Russian Czar Nicholas II. All bend forward to see the map.

HADES

Achaeans, Trojans, hacking each other to death. May the carnage never end.

POSEIDON

He served me well. He shall have his revenge.

ZEUS

When? It can't go on forever.

POSEIDON

And why not?

ZEUS

You just saw. My Hector is invincible. The Achaeans are no match for him. So brother Poseidon, are you ready to call it quits? This game begins to bore me.

POSEIDON

It is not over quite yet, brother Zeus.

He smiles and points to the screen. It switches to the triplane where Hermes is flying Achilles and Patroclus to the front.

All are shocked.

ZEUS

Achilles! How the hell did you get him in the game?

POSEIDON

(gleefully)

How many Trojans will he bring down? A mighty fighter, and invincible to boot. I think the great Hector has met his match. What do you think, brother?

ZEUS

That depends on... Excuse me. I see
someone to whom I must speak
urgently.

He departs. Poseidon looks after him curiously.

POSEIDON

What's he up to?

17. INT. THE OLYMPICA HOTEL AND SPA CHILDREN'S ROOM - DAY

The Goddess APHRODITE is ageless and timeless in her
beauty. She lounges on a chaise-longue, smoking from a long
cigarette holder and idly watching a group of child-gods at
play. Zeus approaches.

ZEUS

Greetings, Aphrodite. It has been a
while.

APHRODITE

Not so long. Just since the last
time someone needed a favour only
the Lady of Love could grant.

ZEUS

You wrong me. I merely wish to
inquire after the well-being of my
favourite daughter.

APHRODITE

And...

ZEUS

I believe you are familiar with
Poseidon's latest champion.

APHRODITE

Achilles? Not as familiar as I would
like. A true warrior, that one. I do
not believe he has ever tasted love.

ZEUS

That would be unfortunate indeed. It
might even weaken him, detract from
his warrior spirit.

APHRODITE

Hmm. Remind me again why I should do
you this favour.