

Journey from the Sun

Episode IV - Mars

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Draft #9

Final Draft

(The following is the opening chapter for Journey from the Sun: Episode IV - Mars, a space odyssey that reimagines the origins of the solar system. This is the story of how Mars became The Red Planet)

--Chapter 1: Where do we begin?

(a stage)

(a chorus)

Herald: It began with a scream.

(a wild shriek pierces through the air)

Chorus: *(Each line may be attributed to one member or spoken in unison.)*

A scream that emptied men's stomachs
That rippled across the fields
That sickened the very soul
Of all who heard it,
And all did hear it.
Wave after wave of insufferable sound,
Crashing over every household, every ear,
Infecting the people with writhing convulsions.
Children wailed in agony;
Men and Women were broken,
Sundered from any sense of who they were
Or what was what
Or why.

It came from the depths of Olympus Mons.
Mount Olympus.
The crown jewel of the fourth planet from the Sun
And the castle of its Goddess,
The Goddess of Mars
She was The Last Born of the Royal Gods,
Cursed with a hideous scar
Running down her face.
An error of creation long ago
That had divided the solar system in two.

For in the days of long before
The Father and Mother lived together--
The Father as builder and wielder of light;
The Mother as designer and weaver of shadow.
Together they created four children
Each more perfect than the last
Until the last--
Until The Father's first and final slip

Marred their daughter's face beyond repair.
As retribution for deforming her child,
The Mother had sought to strike her fellow creator down
And so the Father cast her out,
Building a great and mighty wall
That stood impregnably between the children of the sun
And the wasteland stretching beyond.
This was the state of the realm
Recognizable in every twist
Of the Last Born's scar.
This was the world that she had created.
She cursed the solar system with her hideous scar
And the system cursed her in return.

But she was not without her blessings.
Indeed, she was cunning.
Indeed, she was strong,
And she possessed
The most beautiful blue eyes.
Eyes that were the envy
Of every being, high or low,
Mortal or immortal.
Eyes that were no one else's but her's,
Until one day

One day.

This day.

*(Silhouette: We see a shadowy figure rip out **The Last Born's** eyes.)*

This day the ground did tremble.
The soil seemed to open up
And swallow cities whole,
Feasting upon the helpless
By the incalculable masses.
And, worst of all, the crown of Mars
Olympus Mons
Split open,
Gushing fire,
Rock
Dust
And ash,
Blankets of ash to swaddle the sky,
No light from the Father to guide
The helpless and the hopeless,

No matter the cost.
The Father begged him to stay
For a god that leaves their planet
Must do so with a vessel,
The body of a mortal,
And therefore risks their very life
If ever they embark on such a quest.
But the Father also saw the determination
That beamed from his son's eyes
And knew there would be no persuading him.
So he blessed him, and granted him Sol
His personal sword
The finest creation from his forge
And the most powerful weapon in the solar system.
This, he gave unto his son
Upon condition that at his journey's end
The Father would no later awake to find
His sword and son returned to him.

The First Born called upon his army
The soldiers of Mercury
To embark upon a most noble quest
Of lifting their Marian brothers
From the shackles of bondage
Or perish under the crushing weight
Of eternal and irredeemable shame.
Not one soldier refused this calling.
Nor did one soldier withhold the desire
To be chosen as the First Born's Vessel.
Many boasted of their strength,
Their brilliance, and their bravery.
Many professed that they were princes,
Generals, and heroes of wars past.
But The First Born chose none of them.
He chose a man
Like any other
To receive the greatest honor of his planet
And the great responsibility with which it came.
A man like any other
Or so it seemed.
His name was Alexios.

Alexios: Brothers and sisters!

Chorus: The body of a mortal
Holding the mind of a god.

Alexios: Children of the sun!

Chorus: As his last soldier
Stepped off the ship
Onto the salt-white soil
Of the ruined Marian planet,
Alexios spoke to them all.

Alexios: Tyranny dies at the ends of your blades
And civilization sleeps behind your shields!
When the sun shines once more on this weathered sphere
Let it find no trace of the evil that once reigned.
Go forth and do the work of The Father.

Chorus: Our Father.

The Mercurian army fought bravely and bitterly,
Slowly retaking the planet.
With every village and every station they took,
More liberated Marians joined their cause.
But as they finally approached the great volcano,
A tremendous army stood before them
Made up of the many inhabitants
Still loyal to their Goddess
And led by the towering Goddess herself

The exhausted Mercurian soldiers
Began to feel that they had fought long enough
“This is insane!”
“This is more than insane, this is a death sentence!”
“I will fight, but I will not be a sacrifice.”
“Alexios, our ships are right behind us
Ready to depart on your command
The Goddess of Destruction stands in front
A tranquil passage homeward stands in back.
Why press on?”
“Why go forward?”
“Why not bring your people home?”
“Send us home”
“Send us home”
“Send us home”

*(The chanting increases until the voice of **Alexios** pierces through it.)*

Alexios: What if it were me?

(They quiet down.)

What if it had been me?
Who ripped open the ground,
Blackened your skies
And starved you of Our Father's light,
Would you have cried out?
Or what if it had been you
Kneeling before the destruction of your home
At the hands of a tyrant
Unafraid to punish you for a crime you did not commit,
Would you have yearned for justice?
If it were your spouse at your side
And your children clutching your leg
Would you bow before the ruler
That would readily destroy them?
Or would you stand your sacred ground
And fight to your dying breath
If but to say to them you are Mercurians!
And Mercurians do not submit to tyrants.

Dwell on that all you like.
Dwell on what you'd do if it were you,
But it is not you.
It is your Marian allies who face this reality--
Your allies who have bled right along your side;
Who have marched as many miles,
Who have slain as many foes,
And who have lost as many friends
As you have in this struggle.
Where will they go when you retreat?
What home have they to which they might return?
Do their families rest safely away from the danger?

If you wish to go back to Mercury
While you may still call it safe,
Then turn around and get aboard that ship.
If you wish to see your home, do so;
Go and hold your loved ones with affection.

Do this, and I will bless you,
But I will not follow.

Because, brothers and sisters,
I cannot forget myself.
I cannot forget our Marian comrades standing here today
Who, I have no doubt,
Would be answering the call if it were me;
Who would proudly draw their swords If it were me,
Spill their blood if it were me,
Break their bones if it were me;
In the name of what is right
They would no doubt give their life if it were me,
But it is not me!
It is the whole of Marian existence
Which faces its complete extinction,
With a bag drawn over its head
And a rag shoved down its throat
And no one left to rescue it but us.

Brothers and sisters,
It is you, it is we who have been called
To liberate the oppressed,
To defend the needy,
To vanquish tyrants,
To chase the highest honor,
To risk that we must forfeit
All that we hold dear
Because we will not allow it to be taken from us!
Who among you
Will join me in the battle
Between everything you love
And everything you hate?
To those who say, "Aye!"
Await glory,
Immortality,
And the chance to strike at the heart
Of the ultimate wickedness
In the history of our creation!

(The soldiers get freaking hyped.)

(The battle horn sounds as the enemy yells and charges toward them. A moment of hesitation.)

Your families are watching us,
Your fellow creatures are watching us,

The gods themselves are watching us,
Come with me
And I will make those who stay
The envy of those who return.

(Title Card: "Journey from the Sun. Episode IV: Mars)

(They fight.)

Chorus: And so the two sides fought
Until, at last, the Mercurians prevailed.
Alexios beheld the blind tyrant,
But in an act of mercy,
He took pity on his sister,
Who was truly the least fortunate
Of the children of the Father,
Our Father,
And decided to spare her life.
However, he knew
That such wickedness must be punished
And could never be allowed to reign again.
And so he sealed her in the deepest vault
Of Olympus Mons
And converted her former palace
Into a divine prison
From which she could never leave.

The Last Born: Justice?
This is my Justice?
This isn't what you want,
But simply what is right?
How can you be so blind?
You who would reduce me
To the lowest of the low
Who would have me buried and forgotten
For ideals.
Where were your ideals
When he desecrated my body?
Where was your lust for justice then?
When he took away my eyes
I came to you for justice.
And now you've come
To take away my voice.
But I cannot be silenced,

Not forever.
No matter how long I must wait
One day, I will return.
And when that day arrives
I will not come to you for justice,
But revenge.

(The tomb is sealed; the cell is locked; the mountain is closed up; peace.)

(Visit mattbadermedia.com or contact Matt Bader at matt.bader.acting@gmail.com to read the full story)