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SF PERUSALS

The Illiad, The Odyssey, and All of Greek Mythology in 99 minutes or less

Jay Hopkins
and John Hunter

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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PLAYWRIGHT BIOS

JAY HOPKINS has been an actor, improvisor, director and producer in Orlando, Florida since 1989. He has created and directed several improvisational based shows including FOOLISH HEARTS, CAPTAIN GOODNESS VS. THE INJUSTICE LEAGUE, and AUDITION, which were produced at the SAK Theatre Comedy Lab, where he was Artistic Producer and a member of the company since 1992. Jay is currently the founder and Artistic Director of the Jester Theater Company in Orlando Florida.

JOHN HUNTER is an Emeritus member of the Writer's Guild of America. He was a staff writer for the Showtime television series RUDE AWAKENING, and UPN's series GROWN-UPS. Other notable work include: contributions to Comedy Central's THE MAN SHOW; POLITICALLY INCORRECT WITH BILL MAHER; and optioned screenplays with New Line Cinema and Fox 2000 Studios. He currently works as Associate Artistic Director of the SAK Theatre Comedy Lab in Orlando, Florida.

Jay and John have known each other and performed together since 1992. Together, they have written for the sketch comedy shows TRENDY BRITCHES and CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE, as well as the Orlando International Fringe Festival favorite NEARSIGHTED JUSTICE, the improvised courtroom comedy that had its extended run at SAK Theatre Comedy Lab.

THE ILIAD, THE ODYSSEY & ALL OF GREEK MYTHOLOGY IN 99 MINUTES OR LESS was first produced by Diana Hopkins and The Jester Theater Company at the Studio Theatre on March 2, 2007, in Orlando, Florida. The performance was directed by Jay Hopkins, with sets and sound design by Jay Hopkins, costumes by Alea Schroeder, lilghting by Charles Downs, and props by Alea Schroeder and Diana Hopkins. The Production Stage Manager was Jennifer Russo. The cast was as follows:

M1 . . . . . Ryan Gigliotti
M2 . . . . . Jamie Cline
M3 . . . . . Chase Padgett
F1 . . . . . Jamie Bridwell
F2 . . . . . Gina DiRoma

THE SETTING

The stage is a unit set with areas represented as necessary. A couple of risers, Greek columns, benches, a chair, a few props (necessary for onstage character changes) and a timer.

THE SCENES

The scenes are indicated in Bold throughout the script but change fluidly from one to the next, with maybe only a light change to indicate the new scene.

THE ROLES

The actors will play multiple roles, switching back and forth as necessary. Actors will play the same characters throughout the show (see character breakdown). Roles do NOT switch from actor to actor.

This script is written for 5 actors (3M, 2F) for the most fun, but can be cast in any combination, and if more actors are cast, roles can be divided accordingly by the director.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

Since casting is very flexible, here is a description of the types best suited for the roles as they are divided now.

M1 – The more mature and masculine of the three men. A feeling of authority and dignity will help this actor. Key roles are Zeus and Achilles, Old Nestor, Perseus and Old Dog.

M2 – The more impulsive and eager of the three men. His emotional rawness and passion play large parts in his characters. Key roles are Odysseus, Hector and Hera.

M3 – The goofiest and more cartoon-like of the three men. Natural comedic skills are a major plus for this actor playing so many different character parts. Key roles are Hermes, Man, Paris, Agamemnon, Diomedes and Hercules.

F1 – The more mature of the two women. A solid actress with the ability to show wounded emotions and dignity. Key roles are Athena, Demeter, Ms. Henderson, Patroklos and Oracle.

F2 – The more ingénue of the two women. Youthfulness is a help but she still plays older as well. Key roles are Aphrodite, Pandora, Helen of Troy and Old King Priam.

Actors will each play 18 to 32 characters as listed on the chart in the back of the script.

SCENIC OUTLINE

Act I

A – Opening / Creation / Titan War
B – The Gods
C – The Creation of Mankind
D – Pandora
E – The Earth Goddess - Demeter & Persephone
F – The Earth God - Dionysus w/ Zeus & Semele
G – Greek Chorus of the Madwomen
H – Love Stories, Pt. 1
I – The Wedding that started it all & the Apple of Discord
J – Paris kidnaps Helen /Menelaos and Agamemnon call to war
K – Oracle / Agamemnon gets Achilles and Odysseus

THE ILIAD:

Book 1 – Achilles gets screwed by Agamemnon
Book 2 – False dream / rally speech
Book 3 – Paris challenges Menelaos
Book 4 – Hera sends Athena to Pandaros the Archer
Book 5 – Diomedes Rules w/ Athena's help
Book 6 – Diomedes & Glaukos / Hector, Helen & Paris
Book 7 – Choosing warriors / Ajax vs. Hector +Antenor
Book 8 – Iris messenger
Book 9 – Odysseus tries to reason w/ Achilles
Book 10 – Odysseus & Diomedes night raid
Book 11 – Diomedes wounded by Paris / Cooking pot
Book 12 – Trojan omens
Book 13 – Poseidon tries to help / Odysseus loses the keys
Book 14 – (just a lot of arguing)
Book 15 – Patroklos confers w/ Nestor
Book 16 – Patroklos gets armor and gets killed
Book 17 – Menelaos and the gun
Book 18 – Achilles tries monologuing/Thetis + Hephaestus
Book 19 – Achilles returns to fight / Noble steed
Book 20 – Zeus sends the Gods to war
Book 21 – The Brawl by the Wall
Book 22 – The Battle
Book 23 – (A dream and a funeral)
Book 24 – The Final Book – Hermes & Priam sent to reason w/ Achilles

Act II

A – The Love Stories, Pt. 2
B – Greek Idol Pt. 1 / Jason, Perseus, Theseus
C – The Poker Game
D – Greek Idol Pt. 2 / Phaethon, Hercules
E – Houses of Tragedy
F – Greek Idol Pt. 3 / Odysseus wins
G – The Trojan Horse

THE ODYSSEY:

H – The Odyssey begins
I – The Cyclops
J – The Land of the Wind
K – Circe of the Enchantress
L – Land of the Dead
M – The Choices
N – Calypso
O – The Phaecians
P – The Final Journey Home
Q – Father/Son reunion
R – Suitors & Old Dog
S – The Plan and the Prayers
T – Slaughter in the Hall
U – The Great Bed
V – The Ending

PRODUCTION NOTES
FROM JAY HOPKINS AND JOHN HUNTER:

1) Obviously, this show could be cast with more actors (taking a lot of the fun out of it...for you AND the audience, in our opinion). We did this with three men and two women, with men and women playing male AND female roles. If you wish to cast differently, that's your business. You have our permission. Let us know how it works out.

2) This is a PROP HEAVY show. In order for the actors to play multiple roles quickly, (sometimes switching onstage, back and forth between three roles in three or four consecutive lines), we needed to find one or two costume pieces or props that could identify a character immediately [For example: Zeus always carried a lightning bolt; Achilles carried a dumbbell when he wasn't fighting; Odysseus just wears glasses. These pieces were added to the base toga costumes.] Again, if you have the budget and costume crew to use more elaborate changes, that's your business. Let us know how it works out.

3) Obviously, this is a silly show. Please have lots and lots of fun doing it! Don't take yourself too seriously. That doesn't mean mug, comment or do unnecessary takes to the audience. That will come off as begging for laughs. Audiences don't like that. They will much prefer you give it your earnest attention.

We found the longer a character is onstage, the stronger and less cartoony it needs to be. The less time onstage, the more silly it can be. Dialects, accents, impressions, caricatures, whatever take you want to do, just be certain that they are distinct enough...because you'll confuse the audience if you're not solid in all the parts. The costume accessories will only help, but the portrayal of each character makes the difference.

4) The clock. If you put a clock onstage...the audience will watch it. You don't have to, but it is part of the fun. We'd prefer an actual timer of 99 minutes that an audience can see, can be stopped by the cast, and sounds a bell or buzzer when time is up.

We couldn't find a 90 minute timer (original title of the show... *Il, Od & All...in 90 minutes or less*). We actually had a kitchen timer set for 60 minutes and then added the time after the intermission, in front of the audience to make 90 minutes total. If the timer went off at 60 minutes and the first act was still going on, either Zeus or Hermes would step into the scene and say, "I'm a God. I command more time." and then added time as appropriate. The Ml actor would just set the timer off at the end of the show for the final bell and cast sigh. Whatever solution you come up with, we'd like to know.

5) Pacing is everything. This show moves. Actors need to be predictive with entrances and exits and character switches. They need to be on each others heels. This does NOT mean say lines so fast that you lose meaning, comic timing or intent. Pick up your cues, don't speed through your lines. Trust us: it will all sound the same and then the drone will bore your audience.

for Dorkus McGorkus and Piso Mojado...
and to Angela, of course.

ACT I

The Opening

(The stage is bare, except for a couple of benches and a timer of some sort. **M1** *enters the stage at a deliberate and unhurried pace. He walks to the timer so the audience can see and sets it running for 99 minutes. He steps forward.)*

M1. *(calmly)* Hello, and welcome to…

(Instantly, **F1** *runs onstage with a panicked look!)*

F1. *(shouting backstage)* Oh My God HE STARTED THE CLOCK!

ALL OFFSTAGE. He WHAT!???!

(M2 *runs onstage.)*

M2. STOP IT FOR GOD'S SAKE! No one told us we were starting!

(F1 *stops* **M2** *from stopping clock, leading him offstage.* **M1** *exits as* **F2** *enters.)*

M1. I thought we should welcome the…

F1. No time! Let's GO!!!

The Creation

F2. The Creation! In the beginning there was only chaos until a wind born egg begat Mother Earth, who was called Gaea…so we'll call her Gaea. And Father Heaven, who was called Uranus, so we'll call him... Father Heaven, because I can't even say Uranus with a straight face.

Their children were Monsters and Cyclopses and Titans. Father Heaven hated the Monsters, which upset Mother Earth very much, so she begged her child Cronus to help her. Cronus wounded Father Heaven terribly, and from his blood sprang the Giants...and the Eagles, and the Broncos, and of course the Furies, whose job was to punish the sinners.

Anyway, Titan Cronus became ruler of the universe and that is the story of the creation…part 1.

The Titan War

(**M3** *enters.*)

M3. Part 2! So, Cronus was ruling the Universe after wounding Uranus…

ALL OFFSTAGE VOICES. Ewww!

M3. After wounding Father Heaven, Cronus found out that one of his children was destined to dethrone him. So he swallowed all his children as soon as they were born.

When his wife-slash-sister-slash-queen Rhea caught on, after the first *five* children, she snuck the baby Zeus away to Crete. When Zeus was grown, there was a big battle between Cronus and Zeus. The monsters fought on the side of Zeus with weapons of thunder, lightning and earthquake and atomic wedgies, and Zeus won.

Zeus punished Cronus by binding him in chains and banishing him to Tartarus, the land of decay and plaque build up. He forced Atlas, who fought alongside Cronus, to bear the weight of Heaven and Earth on his shoulders.

Zeus and the Greek Gods now ruled the Universe.

The Gods

(**M2** *enters.)*

M2. Programs! Programs! Can't do the myths if you don't know the Gods! And you won't know the Gods without a program! Getcha' programs right here!
We give you your starting lineup of the Tweeeeellllllve Greeeeeaaatttt Olympians!!!!!! Starting with the Head of the Olympians: stronger than all the remaining Greek Gods combined; he wields the mighty thunderbolt; his bird is the eagle and his tree the mighty oak. He's got grandeur, he's got glory…heeeere's ZEUS!

*(***ZEUS** *[***M1***] enters proudly with* **JANE** *[***F1***].* **M2** *exits.)*

M1-ZEUS. Thank you, thank you, and thank you.

F1-JANE. No, thank you. So Zeus…big reputation to live up to tonight. How do you feel about tonight's show?

M1-ZEUS. Wow, Jane. That's a good question. You know, I'm not ALL powerful. I can be tricked or fooled. *(with false modesty)* I'm just a God. Tonight, I'm looking to tell a few good stories. I'd just like to have some fun and maybe meet a few women…and if that means making an animal out of myself, then so be it!

F1-JANE. Thanks Zeus. We're all looking forward to seeing you, whatever you look like.

*(***ZEUS** *exits.)*

Next up for the Olympians we've got a real tough cookie. Born the "cow-faced" daughter of Titan Cronus, she's the sister AND the wife of Zeus. She's the protector of marriage. The cow and the peacock are sacred to her. Here she comes. It's HERA!!!

*(***HERA** *[***M2***] enters wearing a cow nose.)*

M2-HERA. Were you flirting with Zeus? I swear if you were I'll smite you.

F1-JANE. No, no, honest. Hera, could we talk about tonight?

M2-HERA. Oh, sure. I'm just going to keep my eye on Zeus and step in when I'm needed. Oh, and I'd like to say "hi" to my daughter Ilithyia. She couldn't be here tonight because she's helping women in childbirth. Hi baby!

F1-JANE. Good for her! Good luck tonight.

*(***HERA** *exits.)*

Next up for the Greek squad: Zeus's brothers. First, of course, he's the tide shaper and the wave-maker, commonly called the "Earth-shaker." And his brother; elusive, mysterious, hard to see because of his helmet of invisibility. Please welcome the Lord of the Sea and the King of the Dead…POSEIDON AND HADES!!!!!!!!!

*(***POSEIDON** *[***M1***] and* **HADES** *[***M2***] enter.* **POSEIDON** *carries his trident and is a fun- loving crowd-pleasing surfer dude.* **HADES** *carries the helmet of invisibility on a stick.)*

M1-POSEIDON. Woooo!!! How's it going sea lovers!!!!! It's great to be me. Let me tell you…Zeus, Hades and me, we drew lots! Are you kidding me!?! I got the seas! I got my hot bride Amphitrite and I got an awesome palace! I ROCK!!!! Check me out world!!! *(starts twirling his trident martial arts style)* Awesome!!!!!

*(***POSEIDON** *will play in the background, then exit.* **M2** *steps in as Hades voice, then actually as Hades when he takes off the helmet.)*

F1-JANE. *(talking to empty helmet)* And here we have Death himself, Hades! How are you tonight?

M2-HADES VOICE. Not to nitpick, but I am not Death… that's Thanatos. I am the *King* of the Dead.

F1-JANE. Rumor has it you're an eligible bachelor. Any chance of taking off that helmet of invisibility to let the ladies see you?

(He does, revealing a goofy face.)

OOH! Well, good luck on finding that special someone!

*(***HADES** *exits.)*

Now we're going to go to Tom. Who have you found Tom?

*(***JANE** *exits for quick change to* **ATHENA**. **TOM** *[***M1***] enters.)*

M1-TOM. Thanks, Jane. This next goddess is the daughter of Zeus, the "gray-eyed" Goddess of warfare and wisdom. The owl is her bird, the olive (created by her) is her tree and Athens is her city. Please welcome… ATHENA!

*(***ATHENA** *[***F1***] enters.)*

Good Evening, Athena. Is there any truth to the rumors of your birth?

F1-ATHENA. Yes, Tom, it's true. I sprang out of my father's head, fully grown, dressed in armor. I guess that's why I'm his favorite.

M1-TOM. Talk about a Caesarian!

F1-ATHENA. Actually, Caesar is Roman. I'm Greek. I'm the only one Daddy trusts to carry his thunderbolts.

M1-TOM. Fascinating!

F1-ATHENA. Now, I know I can be a bit war-like, but don't think of me as unfeminine. I only get that way when I am defending the state and home from outside enemies.

M1-TOM. And when dealing with Paris of Troy.

F1-ATHENA. Hey, he had it coming!

(She exits.)

M1-TOM. Ooooh! Foreshadowing the Iliad! Moving on. These next two Olympians are twin siblings of the fruitful Zeus and their mother, the Titan Leto. They are the gods of the sun and moon respectively. Let's here it for APOLLO AND ARTEMIS!!!!!!!! Thank you both for coming.

*(***APOLLO** *[***M2***] and* **ARTEMIS** *[***F2***] enter. He wears a laurel wreath, carries his golden lyre and is calm and well-mannered. She has a bow and arrow and is a bit on*

the wild, uncivilized side. She is tracking something.)

M2-APOLLO. Thank you for hosting us this evening. The pleasure is all ours.

F2-ARTEMIS. Sssshhhhhh.

*(***ARTEMIS** *sees something offstage, aims and shoots her bow and arrow, clearly hits something and runs off to get whatever it is she has shot.)*

M1-TOM. Apollo, look. Your lyre!

M2-APOLLO. Lyre? I'm the God of Truth.

M1-TOM. No. I mean your harp! I bet our audience would love a song!

(As Apollo speaks his next line, a **ROADIE** *[***M3***] runs out and places an amp next to him and hands him the cord to plug in, which he does w/o even looking.)*

M2-APOLLO. Well, I didn't really prepare anything.

(SFX- Rock guitar bend down followed by the opening notes of a blazing rendition of "Stairway to Olympus.")

M1-TOM. *(cutting him off almost instantly)* Oh, I'm sorry, we're running short on time. Thanks so much though. Let's give him a hand everyone.

*(***ROADIE** *strikes amp.* **TOM** *gently pushes* **APOLLO** *out.)*

M2-APOLLO. Thank you. If you'd like to book me, I'm available for parties. Just call my oracle in Delphi.

(As **APOLLO** *makes his gracious exit,* **ARTEMIS** *reappears carrying her prey and ready to hunt more.* **TOM** *reels her in.)*

M1-TOM. Thank you…oh look! Here she is, the Goddess of the Moon, protectress of young women. Any advice for the folks watching?

F2-ARTEMIS. Uhm…Be good to the cypress trees and wild animals…especially the deer, OK? So fine, can I go… your cologne smells like a three-headed dog marked his territory on you.

M1-TOM. *(embarrassed, slyly smelling himself)* Sure thing. Good

luck to you. Let's go back to Jane.

*(***ARTEMIS** *exits for quick change to Aphrodite.* **TOM** *exits.* **JANE** *[***F1***] enters.)*

F1-JANE. Thanks Tom! With our next goddess comes beauty. The myrtle is her tree, the dove is her bird. Straight from the sea-foam, let's give some love to the lovely laughter loving Goddess of Love and Beauty… APHRODITE!!!!!

*(***APHRODITE** *[***F2***] enters wearing Greek letters, Alpha Rho Delta (*ΑΡΔ*). She is giggling and not unlike a spoiled sorority girl.)*

F2-APHRODITE. Oh , Hi!!!! Hey, where's the party?

(Offstage we hear **HEPHAESTUS***.)*

M3-HEPHAESTUS VOICE OFFSTAGE. Aphrodite? Sweetheart? Where are you?

*(***HEPHAESTUS** *[***M3***] enters fully a geek with horn rimmed glasses taped at the bridge and Vulcan ears.)*

M3-HEPHAESTUS. There you are my one true love.

F1-JANE. Ladies and Gentleman, this is Mr. Aphrodite, the God of Fire himself, Hephaestus.

M3-HEPHAESTUS. Uhm, actually, she's Mrs. Hephae…

F2-APHRODITE. *(annoyed, aside to* **HEPHAESTUS***)* What do you want?

M3-HEPHAESTUS. What, oh, right. *(trying to be firm)* Sweetheart, for this anniversary, which ONE do you want… A diamond, an emerald, or a ruby?

F2-APHRODITE. *(putting on the charm instantly)* Could I have one of each?

M3-HEPHAESTUS. *(caving instantly)* Anything for you my angelic pearl.

F2-APHRODITE. Oh! And pearls too!

*(***HEPHAESTUS** *exits happy as an oyster shell.)*

F1-JANE. Wow, Aphrodite, that was quite impressive.

F2-APHRODITE. I know, thanks. It's not that hard actually.

He was coddled way too much by Hera. But he's nice and he builds everything for us in Olympus. Oops, look at the time, I have got to go get ready for a wedding!!!

F1-JANE. Oh, who's getting married?

F2-APHRODITE. The sea nymph Thetis is marrying one of the first humans, King Peleus! *(beat)* I think I'll wear white!

*(***APHRODITE** *exits.)*

F1-JANE. We'll look for you there.

*(***THOR** *[***M2***] enters carrying his hammer.)*

Ladies and Gentlemen: Look, I believe it's Ares, God of War!!!!

M2-THOR. *(caught, lying with thick Norwegian accent)* Jah! Dats Me! I em Ee-rees, Gad uff Var, Jah!

F1-JANE. Hey wait a minute! You're Thor. You're a Norse God! Security! Wow. Can you believe that, Tom?

*(***THOR** *looks around and makes a quick escape.* **TOM** *[***M1***] enters.)*

M1-TOM. Oh that Thor! Sadly, we've just been notified that the real Ares, can't be here right now, he's preparing for the Trojan War.

F1-JANE. That's a shame Tom, but really nice foreshadowing again.

M1-TOM. Thanks. We're not missing much, Jane. Ares is pretty much a mean coward of a deity, who runs away when he gets wounded. He keeps pretty unpleasant company like his sister Discord and her son Strife and the Goddess of War, Enyo.

F1-JANE. Oh, I hate her music! It's so annoying…anya-hood-oo, enya-frodo, whatever…

*(***JANE** *[***F1***] exits.)*

M1-TOM. Well, as I said, I'm sure we'll get to see him during the Iliad. Next on our list is the Goddess of the Hearth and symbol of the home. She's a virgin goddess and the sister of Zeus…it's Hestia!!!!

*(***HESTIA** *[***F2***] enters. She wears a crinoline skirt and pearls.)*

Thank you for coming out tonight. Unfortunately, you have NO distinct personality and play NO PART in the myths.

*(***TOM** *gently yet firmly guides her out.* **HESTIA***, who was clearly looking forward to saying something, leaves with her mouth agape.)*

Wasn't she great?! Finally, rounding out the 12 Great Olympians, he's best known as the Messenger of the Gods. Heeeeerre's HERMES!!!!!

(SFX -rock crowd cheering. **HERMES** *[***M3***] enters and uses his wand as a mike.* **TOM** *exits.)*

M3-HERMES. Wassup my peeps! Glad to be here tonight! As Messenger of the Gods, I'd like to send some shout-outs for tonight!

I wanna' say "You Go Girl!" to Iris, Goddess of the Rainbow, who is the other messenger of the gods… you have my 'spect, baby girl!

I wanna give "a tip of the winged hat" to Eros, baby B-boy and God of Love!

Three "shouts" to the Three Graces; Splendor, Mirth and Good Cheer! I wanna party with you! And don't forget my nine Muses…your names may be hard but you know you're hardcore awesome!

"What up?!" to my main men Zeus's sidekicks, Themis and Dike. There is no justice like Human or Divine Justice…you know I'm talking about you! And a "wave" to Poseidon's pals Proteus and Triton.

"Wild words" to my son Pan!

Last and definitely not least, to the humans about to be invented I wanna say, "Good luck, you're gonna need it!" And since I've got the mike…

(becoming serious)

The Creation of Mankind

M3-HERMES Now is the time to populate the world with creatures of all shape, kind and manner. The Titans Metheus, come forth and be commanded.

*(***EPIMETHEUS** *[***M1***] and* **PROMETHEUS** *[***M2***] enter. Epimetheus is clearly A.D.D., while Prometheus is obviously level-headed and smart.)*

Epimetheus and Prometheus. You stood by the side of mighty Zeus when he fought Cronus, and for that he is indebted. Now he gives to you this honor. Make mankind.

M2-PROMETHEUS. It shall be.

*(***HERMES** *exits.)*

M1-EPIMETHEUS. So cool. Okay. Make all the creatures great and small. *(pulling out large instruction manual and quickly flipping pages*) This is too long. Too many words…no pictures...

M2-PROMETHEUS. Alright, making the creatures & don't forget mankind.

M1-EPIMETHEUS. *(tosses book)* I got it. Lets give the deer antlers. The bears get fur and claws. The hippo gets two giant white teeth, but only on the bottom of the mouth.

M2-PROMETHEUS. And mankind…

M1-EPIMETHEUS. No wait. I know. The monkeys, will throw poo to defend themselves. The elephant can squirt fire out of its nose…and the mynah bird should have laser eyes that shoot lasers!

M2-PROMETHEUS. Impressive. Poo, fire, lasers. And what have you left for man? We're supposed to make the humans. You've given all the good stuff to the creatures.

M1-EPIMETHEUS. Crap. I forgot to save anything cool for the humans. What do I do now? You gotta help me!

M2-PROMETHEUS. Alright calm down. Let me see what we've got.

M1-EPIMETHEUS. Thanks. Great. Hey man! Here man! Stay! Sit! I said stay! Good man. Good man!

*(***MAN** *[***M3***] enters like a monkey, then squats.)*

M2-PROMETHEUS. That's it? He has nothing to protect himself. He'll never be able to master the beasts.

M1-EPIMETHEUS. Zeus is gonna' be pissed.

M2-PROMETHEUS. Wait a second. What if we make him more in Zeus's image. More like him.

*(***EPIMETHEUS** *poses and* **PROMETHEUS** *then shapes* **MAN** *upright. They both look at him for a second and groan in disappointment.)*

M1-EPIMETHEUS. That's the best you can do?

M2-PROMETHEUS. Give me a minute I'm thinking!

M1-EPIMETHEUS. Well think faster!

M2-PROMETHEUS. HEY! It wasn't me who gave the mynah bird laser eyes!

M1-EPIMETHEUS. Okay fine! So we give the laser eyes to man!

M2-PROMETHEUS. It's not as easy as that Epi! Listen, if you give man lasers or claws or whatever, he'll just hurt himself. Man is a stupid, stupid creature. What would be really smart is to make him...smart.

M1-EPIMETHEUS. Okay. How do we do that?

M2-PROMETHEUS. I shall steal fire and give it to man.

(He takes a lighter out and gives it to **MAN** *who gleefully plays with it. Dramatically to audience.)*

And now upright, though man may be feeble and weak and short-lived, he now has flaming fire, and from that he shall learn many crafts.

M1-EPIMETHEUS. Who are you talking to???

M2-PROMETHEUS. Never mind…just…go get Zeus and tell him we're ready.

*(***EPIMETHEUS** *quick changes to* **ZEUS** *[***M1***].)*

Mighty Zeus, I present you with man.

(SFX – drum roll.)

M3-MAN. *(weakly)* Ta-da.

M1-ZEUS. That's it? Where's the claws, the laser beams, the poo?

M2-PROMETHEUS. He has not need for those, for man has been made in your image and all fear and respect you, Lord of the Sky.

M1-ZEUS. My image, huh…okay…Wait! You didn't give him my lightning bolts did you?

M2-PROMETHEUS. Of course not. I have only given him fire.

M1-ZEUS. Oh, that's okay if it's just…what?!!! FIRE! Are you crazy? Now he's going to learn! Now we have to keep an eye on him forever. *(actor, referring to himself)* Why can't you be more like Epimetheus, so handsome and playful and funny and…

M2-PROMETHEUS. *(scrambling)* This is just the prototype Zeus. He is new and shiny and shall live without sorrow of heart, far from toil. He shall worship you and we shall call this the Golden Race of Man.

M1-ZEUS. *(beat)* I don't like it.

M2-PROMETHEUS. Okay…when the Golden Boys are gone, we shall make a Silver Race…like the Golds, just not as smart.

M1-ZEUS. They're hardly Ivy League material now. If they're any dimmer they'll injure themselves and each other.

M2-PROMETHEUS. Well we can make him any way you like…

M1-ZEUS. I dunno. This mankind thing sounds like a lot of work on my part. Let's just smite them before this goes too far.

*(***MAN** *hides behind* **PROMETHEUS** *who tries to protect him.)*

M2-PROMETHEUS. No!…no no no. Let me keep him. I'll take care of him I promise! Tell you what…just let them run wild for awhile, then *YOU* can zap 'em when it's all done. Fun, right? Right?

M1-ZEUS. So they run themselves for a while and then I get to smite them.

M2-PROMETHEUS. *(claps calling in* **CAROL***)* Right! And look over here. They've even prepared sacrifice to you already. They know You're the Man!

M1-ZEUS. I'm "The God!"

*(***CAROL** *[***F1***] enters with two plates, one covered with burlap, the other with gold satin. She displays them like a game show.)*

M2-PROMETHEUS. Of course. So which sacrifice do you want?

M1-ZEUS. *(to audience)* Uhm…I don't know. What should I do??? The gold looks good…but it could be a zonk! Maybe it's the burlap…I just don't know…uhm, I want you to uncover them.

M2-PROMETHEUS. Oh. Okay. As you can see, one is glistening and tasty looking and one is not as appealing. *(beat)* 99 minute show, Zeus. Let's go.

M1-ZEUS. I want the tasty looking one. Final answer.

M2-PROMETHEUS. Oh…Zeus, I'm sorry, you chose the bones and shining fat.

(SFX: wah wah wah. **CAROL** *exits on Zeus' line.)*

That leaves the meat and leather for mankind.

M1-ZEUS. Argh!!! Prometheus!!! You tricked me! You are in big trouble mister. However, I've given my word and I'll stick to it. Prometheus! You did a bang up job with man, so I'm going to give you a brand new home up high on the Caucasus, a high jagged rock where you shall be bound by adamantine chains that none can break. And an eagle will come to visit you, and feast on your liver every day. All because...You pissed me off!

And Man! Before I go, I want to give you a little gift from all the Gods…in fact that is her name, meaning

"the gift of all." You pronounce it Pandora.

*(***PANDORA** *[***F2***] enters adorable and attractive.* **MAN** *is obviously infatuated with her instantly.)*

M2-PROMETHEUS. Oh NO!

M1-ZEUS. Oh YES! Man shall have his mate. She is of the same material and equal in most ways. She is brave and careless; angry and gracious; foolish and smarter than man by just a hair. Oh, and curious! So curious! She hungers for knowledge and will ask man questions… LOTS AND LOTS of questions. And when a man has all he needs, for he is simple and needs only food, sleep and a mate, she will wonder why? Why is that all he needs? Why doesn't he need more? Why doesn't he want more? If he had more, would he want it? Would he not want it? Why would he want it or not want it? Why? Why?

M2-PROMETHEUS. Man won't stand for it.

M1-ZEUS. Yes he will, for you have made him in my image… standing. Oh, I almost forgot. A present for Pandora. Carol!

*(***CAROL** *[***F1***] brings out a small closed trunk and key, hands it to* **ZEUS***, and exits.)*

Pandora, go and live with man. Be happy, have fun. Here is a gift for you. The only thing is you can NEVER open this box. Here's the key. Remember…NEVER open the box. Now get out of here you crazy kids!

That's all the time we have folks!!! Goodnight!!!!

Pandora

*(***ZEUS** *leads* **PROMETHEUS** *off, leaving* **PANDORA** *and* **MAN** *on stage.* **MAN** *takes a seat and starts to read the paper.* **PANDORA** *continues to ponder the box.)*

M3-MAN. *(reading)* Sweetheart, look at this. Another mynah bird related death.

F2-PANDORA. I wonder what's in the box? Don't you wonder what's in there?

M3-MAN. Nope. Zeus said don't open it. I believe him.

F2-PANDORA. Yeah, but what if it's something nice, like a bed ruffle?

M3-MAN. Why would Zeus tell you to never open a box that has a bed ruffle? Do we even need a bed ruffle?

F2-PANDORA. Of course we need a bed ruffle. You're so silly!!!! How could we live without a bed ruffle? *(***MAN** *stares agape in wonder.)* Ooooh, what if it's a baby!

M3-MAN. Why would he put a baby in a box?

F2-PANDORA. Maybe that's where all the babies are going to come from? Did you ever stop and think about that?

M3-MAN. *(***MAN** *stares agape in wonder.)* Well, yes I have. You know, I am made in Zeus' image. I have an idea where all the babies are going to come from.

(She looks curious, so he whispers to her with some odd hand gestures NOT actually depicting how babies are made. She is clearly fascinated, amused and disgusted at his description. Finally she just laughs out loud.)

F2-PANDORA. You've GOT to be KIDDING.

*(***MAN** *goes back to his paper.)*

(beat) What do you think is in the box?

M3-MAN. I don't know.

F2-PANDORA. Aren't you even curious?

M3-MAN. Nope.

F2-PANDORA. Why not?

M3-MAN. Why should I be? Zeus said never open it.

F2-PANDORA. That means he *wants* me to open it.

M3-MAN. What are you talking about, he said *never* open it.

F2-PANDORA. Right…but he knows what's in the box. If he really didn't want me to open it, he wouldn't have given it to me.

M3-MAN. No, if he didn't want you to open it he would have said, *NEVER* open it.

F2-PANDORA. Then why did he give me the key?

M3-MAN. Just because someone gives you a key doesn't mean they want you to use it.

F2-PANDORA. Name one time you give someone a key if you don't want them to use it.

M3-MAN. Okay, what if I give a house key to Frank…

F2-PANDORA. Who's Frank?

M3-MAN. He's our neighbor.

F2-PANDORA. When did we get a neighbor?

M3-MAN. It doesn't matter. Just pretend, we have a neighbor named Frank and we give him our house key. It doesn't mean we want him to use it. We say *NEVER* use our house key, just keep it in case we lose our own so we can use it later. That's why Zeus gave the key to you. So he can use it himself later.

F2-PANDORA. *(a little pouty)* Oh. *(beat)* How do we know Frank didn't use our key?

M3-MAN. Because we told him NEVER use the key.

F2-PANDORA. But can we trust Frank?

M3-MAN. Forget Frank! How can I explain this? Some things just go together. It's like a pillow sham and a bed ruffle. They go together but you don't use them.

F2-PANDORA. You're supposed to use them.

M3-MAN. Fine. We'll use a pillow sham and a bed ruffle.

F2-PANDORA. So I should open the box.

M3-MAN. Zeus said NEVER open the box.

F2-PANDORA. Right, but he didn't say anything about the key. *(***MAN** *stares agape in wonder)* He clearly wants me to use the key or he would have said NEVER use the key.

M3-MAN. He said **NEVER** open the box.

F2-PANDORA. But he didn't say **NEVER** use the key, did he?? Did HE???

M3-MAN. I guess not.

F2-PANDORA. Good. You open it.

M3-MAN. No way!

F2-PANDORA. Please!

M3-MAN. Not a chance!

F2-PANDORA. Pretty please!

M3-MAN. No.

F2-PANDORA. Well, why not?!

M3-MAN. Because Zeus said.

F2-PANDORA. Zeus said! Zeus said!

M3-MAN. You'd better stop. Seriously, you're going to be sorry.

F2-PANDORA. Fine. I'll do it myself.

M3-MAN. Don't.

F2-PANDORA. It's my box. And my key.

M3-MAN. Pandora. Listen to me. I love you. So seriously, this is the last time I'm going to say this, because I don't want to say "I told you so," …believe me when I say this: ***DON'T OPEN THE BOX***.

(She smiles sweetly and gives man a sweet kiss.)

F2-PANDORA. You said you love me!

(She walks happily to the box, unlocks it and opens it. Lights and SFX: Dark scary ominous loud shrieking woeful sound and lights scaring both **MAN** *and* **PANDORA**. *She quickly closes the box and the noise stops while the lights change to dim. Beat. She instantly turns mad at* **MAN** *before he even opens his mouth to say…)*

M3-MAN. I told you…

F2-PANDORA. Don't You Dare! This is all your fault!

M3-MAN. My fault? How is this my fault?!

F2-PANDORA. If you had just told me to ***NEVER*** open the box…

*(***PANDORA** *exits, quick change to Persephone.* **MAN** *stopped in his tracks.)*

M1-ZEUS VOICE OFFSTAGE. Man?!?!? What did you do?!!!!!!!

(A beat. **MAN** *exits saying…)*

M3-MAN. Son of a…

The Earth Goddess – Demeter and Persephone

*(***DEMETER** *[***F1***] enters.)*

F1-DEMETER. *(to audience)* And now the story of Demeter and Persephone. *(happily calling offstage)* Persephone, my sweet! Come here darling.

*(***PERSEPHONE** *[***F2***] runs in giggling.)*

F2-PERSEPHONE. Yes Mother! Mother, I love the Earth you have made for mankind. The land is lush and so wondrously lovely.

F1-DEMETER. Thank you my darling. Have a good time but do not wander too far.

*(***DEMETER** *exits.)*

F2-PERSEPHONE. I shall collect a bouquet of the prettiest flowers there are, to give to my mother.

*(***PERSEPHONE** *collects flowers. She moves near one side of the stage and* **HADES'** *Helmet on a Stick appears from the wings. She does not see him, of course.)*

M2-HADES' VOICE FROM OFFSTAGE. Ah this beauty. I, Hades, King of the Underworld, I have never seen such beauty before.

(dialogue accelerates and overlaps)

F2-PERSEPHONE. Ah, this beauty I have never seen before. Such a display.

M2-HADES VOICE FROM OFFSTAGE. Such a radiant display. I must have her for my own.

F2-PERSEPHONE. Oh look at this wondrous flower. What?? A chasm in the earth???

*(**SFX** - rumbling earth)*

(She screams and mimes falling. The helmet disappears as **HADES** *steps onstage driving two black hobby horses.)*

M2-HADES. It is I, Hades, full of dark splendor, beautiful and majestic and terrible.

F2-PERSEPHONE. Oh, hell.

M2-HADES. Exactly

(They exit. **DEMETER** *re-enters.* **SKY** *[***M1***] and* **WIND** *[***M3***] enter.)*

F1-DEMETER. Persephone?! Where are you my daughter? Sky?

M1-SKY. Can't help you, sorry.

F1-DEMETER. Wind?!?

M3-WIND. No English.

*(***APOLLO** *[***M2***] enters.)*

F1-DEMETER. Can no one help me? Good sun, mighty Apollo. Where is my daughter?

M2-APOLLO. Demeter, Goddess of the Corn, Mother of Persephone and all around sweetheart. Hades took her to be his queen.

*(***APOLLO** *exits, leaving her to her woe.)*

F1-DEMETER. Oh cruel fate! My most beautiful creation gone to the dark underworld! I am sad! I shall withhold my gifts from this Earth until I get my daughter back. No warmth shall I bring. No seed shall sprout. There shall be no harvest to reap.

(Cast switches as appropriate.)

M3-MAN. Great Goddess! We have built you a temple and yet you forsake us! Zeus! Our father! Help Us! We are certain to die of famine and this is SO not our fault!

M1-ZEUS. *(exasperated)* Here we go! I have to take care of Man! Fine. Hermes!

M3-HERMES. Yo!

M1-ZEUS. Go tell Hades he has to give Persephone back.

*(***PERSEPHONE & HADES** *re-enter. She is eating pomegranate seeds.)*

M3-HERMES. Right. Hades! She must go back or man shall die.

M2-HADES. What?!!! Aww C'mon!!!

M3-HERMES. Hey, Zeus says. That's how I roll.

M2-HADES. Persephone. Your beauty is unmatched and I love you. Be kind, for I am King of the Underworld and if you stay you shall be my Queen.

F2-PERSEPHONE. Look. You're a nice God. Really nice but, *(packing and moving for a quick exit)* well…it's not you, it's me. Really! And you know my mom, she wanted a big wedding with all the Gods there. You amd I just sort of eloped. Actually you kind of kidnapped me. Anyway, I really do think you're sweet… *(aside to* **HERMES***)* **Start the chariot**. *(back to* **HADES***)* I'll call you, okay?

M2-HADES. Whatever.

M3-HERMES. Here she is! Home again!

F2-PERSEPHONE. Momma!

F1-DEMETER. Persy! I missed you so much!

M3-MAN. Still dying of hunger here!

F1-DEMETER. Oh right! Sorry! My bad! Reap! Harvest! Eat! How about you sweetheart? Are you hungry?

F2-PERSEPHONE. No, I just ate some pomegranate seeds before I left the underworld.

M3-HERMES. Whoa, whoa whoa…Hold on there, Princess. The Fates say that once you have eaten in the underworld you cannot leave.

F1 & F2-DEMETER & PERSEPHONE. What?!!!

M3-HERMES. Hey, the Fates say. That's how I roll.

M2-HADES. Yeah!

F2-PERSEPHONE. Zeus?!!! I didn't eat a whole pomegranate, just a few seeds.

M1-ZEUS. Then you shall go back to be the Queen with Hades for one third of the year.

M2-HADES. YES!!!! She's all 1/3rd mine!

F1-DEMETER. Then while Persephone lives here with me it shall be beautiful and bounteous, and when she must go my heart shall turn cold and the land shall be barren and that time shall be called Winter.

(All exiting except **ZEUS***.)*

M3-MAN. Oh nice. *That's* fair!

M1-ZEUS. Quit your whining already!

The Earth God – Dionysus

M1-ZEUS. Hello! What's this??? A beautiful princess of Thebes by the name of Semele. So beautiful and truly a delight to the eyes. Semele, I'm King of the Gods. I love you!

*(***ZEUS** *walks to a woman in the audience. He will flirt and play with the audience woman and obviously lie to* **HERA**, *who is offstage to begin.)*

M2-HERA OFFSTAGE. Sweetheart?

M1-ZEUS. Hera?! Crap! Don't worry about her, baby. Here she comes. Act like you don't know me.

*(***ZEUS** *talks to the man sitting next to audience woman as* **HERA** *enters.)*

M2-HERA. Zeus. Do you know where I put my nice sandals? *(beat)* What are you doing?

M1-ZEUS. Nothing! I'm, uh…just talking with a man. *(points with lightning bolts so* **HERA** *knows which audience member)* This man here and NOT Semele, this attractive woman beside him.

M2-HERA. *(suspiciously)* Really. What were you talking about, hmmm?

M1-ZEUS. Oh you know. Ah, building temples and herding goats…the normal God to mortal stuff. Bow mortal! *(gets audience man to bow)* Your sandals are under the thing…near the stuff …by the plant.

*(***HERA** *stares at* **ZEUS** *and woman and man. Then turns and leaves abruptly.)*

Whew, that was close. Semele, my sweet. Did she scare you?

*(***HERA** *enters and stands directly in front of audience woman. As* **ZEUS** *exits, he gestures to audience woman to keep cool.)*

M2-HERA. I can't find them. Will you get them for me? I'll wait here for you. *(turns to make him leave)* You think

I don't know what's going on. He'll promise you the moon, but if you want his love make him prove it. Make him swear by the River Styx, the Oath that can never be broken, to give you whatever you want, and then ask to see the real him, in all his Godlike glory. You'd better write it down to remember. Here, let me help.

*(***HERA** *hands dialogue to audience woman, turns to leave and walks directly out, never stopping as* **ZEUS** *returns with sandals which she grabs from him as she passes.* **ZEUS** *goes directly to woman, totally acting up the love.)*

M1-ZEUS. Don't worry, she's gone now baby. Let's just be together, you and me. You want the moon…you've got it. Anything you want, you name it.

(This is the prompt to get the audience woman to read:)

AUDIENCE WOMAN. If you love me, then swear by the Styx you'll give me anything I want.

M1-ZEUS. By the Styx…sure. *(a capella)* LAAAAAA-DDDYYYYY! When I'm with you…

AUDIENCE WOMAN. By the River Styx.

M1-ZEUS. Oh, the RIVER Styx. I swear baby, by the River Styx, anything you want.

AUDIENCE WOMAN. Show me yourself in all your Godlike glory.

M1-ZEUS. Aww! Hera put you up to this, didn't she? Fine! I swore by the River Styx. Come with me…

*(***ZEUS** *leads her to the wings, and speaks to her and the audience. She is just offstage being dressed.)*

I will show you and then sadly you shall perish for no mortal can see the brilliant wonder that is me. You will flail about and shriek, cry and moan, pull out your hair and scream as you die an agonizing death. And you will do it in an entertaining and fully committed manner, that may even be mentioned in the review.

(The remainder of the cast rushes onstage and sits down.)

ALL RANDOMLY. She's going to do the death scene, cool. This is the most exciting part of the show. Awesome! Death scene! Move over I want to see this.

M1-ZEUS. And now my true glory.

(Blackout. Drum roll. **ZEUS** *shines flashlight on his own face and* **CAST** *says "Ooooh." Lights up.)*

And now Semele…*(directing)* in an energetic, committed and entertaining manner …you will flail about and shriek *(waits for her)*, cry and moan *(again)*, pull out your hair *(hopefully she will pull off the wig)*, and scream as you die an agonizing death *(wait)*.

(As woman dies, the cast leap to their feet in applause and surround her, taking her props. The men will escort audience woman back to her seat then stand onstage, and the women will take the baby and exit when Zeus gives it to them.)

Sad Semele. Fair spirits, guide her soul back to her seat to thunderous applause from the audience.

Alas, I have saved the child she carried. I give it to you, the nymphs of Nysa. He is born of the burning heat of my glory and nursed by the rain of your land to keep him alive, just like the grapes are.

As the child grows, he shall meet the jovial, fat, drunken, donkey-riding Silenus, who shall teach him the craft and art of the drink and this child shall grow to be Dionysus, The God of Wine.

He will share his gifts with man who will, unfortunately, have no self control. They will drink to excess and grow angry and belligerent.

M2-DRUNKEN MAN. What are you looking at?

M3-DRUNKEN MAN. Well what are you looking at?

(Beat. They struggle.)

M1-ZEUS. Others will turn happy and generous.

M3-DRUNKEN MAN. I love you, man!

M2-DRUNKEN MAN. You're my best friend! Nothing can come between us!

(Beat. Quick embrace.)

M1-ZEUS. And it shall not just be man. Woman shall love the vine as well.

(F1 & F2 *stagger in laughing like they've been at a bar for too long for girls night out. The two pairs regard each other.)*

M3-DRUNKEN MAN. Look at the skanks.

F1-DRUNKEN WOMAN. Check out the dorks.

(Beat. Quick make out pairings.)

M1-ZEUS. And in this way, much of the earth was populated. *(beat)* Now, to learn more, here is a Greek chorus.

(They all become a Greek chorus.)

ALL AS GREEK CHORUS. This is the story of Dionysus and the King of Thebes.

We are the Maenads, the madwomen! We worship Dionysus in the wild. We follow him everywhere, frenzied with wine, dancing and singing. We are the madwomen! *(They do so, for a circuit around the stage.)*

We have followed Dionysus to the city Thebes, where his mother Semele *(gesture to woman from audience)* was overacting when she died.

King Pentheus of Thebes does not like Dionysus or the crazed dancing and singing of the madwomen! *(They do another circuit.)*

And so he ordered the guards to seize us! *(they all attempt to seize each other for a moment)*

M2-THESPIS. And now I, Thespis, the first man to step out of the Greek chorus…

ALL THE REST. That's history, not Mythology!

M2-THESPIS. …will play the part of the great old blind prophet Tiresias as he tries to warn King Pentheus.

"Oh Pentheus, King of Thebes, hear my solemn warning. The man you reject is a new god."

2 OF CHORUS AS PENTHEUS/You're no God!

3 OF CHORUS AS DIONYSUS/Yes I am.

2 OF CHORUS AS PENTHEUS/No you're not!

3 OF CHORUS AS DIONYSUS/Your mother believes me.

2 OF CHORUS AS PENTHEUS/I'm going to chase you!

3 OF CHORUS AS DIONYSUS/I tried to warn you.

2 OF CHORUS AS PENTHEUS/AAAAUUUUGGGHHHHH!

GREEK CHORUS. We saw Pentheus and thought he was a wild beast and pounced upon him and tore him limb from limb, because we are the madwomen! *(They pounce upon themselves and end in a pile.)*

(SFX – school bell. Actors arrange themselves as kindergarten class.)

The Love Stories, Pt. 1

F1-MS. HENDERSON. So class, did you finish your homework on Greek Love stories?

F2-STUDENT. They were so sad. Ms. Henderson? Do all love stories end in tragedy?

F1-MS. HENDERSON. Yes, Amy. Yes they do.

M1-STUDENT. Well, my mom says that not every love story is a tragedy and she says you're twisted because Principal Thomas dumped you.

F1-MS. HENDERSON. First of all, I dumped *him.* Secondly, your mother is a drunk with bad teeth. *All* Greek Love stories are tragic. Apollo and Daphne, Narcissus and Echo, Zeus and Callisto, Zeus and Leto, Brad and Jennifer *[or insert first names of current topical celebrity couple breakup here]* …TRAGIC!

F2-STUDENT. I don't care what you say! I think it would be cool to have a God like Zeus love me!

F1-MS. HENDERSON. A God like Zeus…who's MARRIED TO HERA and tries to have an affair with Io – but when Hera catches on, Zeus turns Io into a white heifer but Hera still blames poor IO for the whole mess and sends gadflies to sting her and gossips about her to the PTA until she goes insane. So poor Io wanders for years and ends up in another school until one day Zeus finally shows his face and turns her mortal again. That Zeus??? Is that the god you're talking about?!?!?!?!?!?!!!!!!!!

(A beat, then all the children start to cry. **PRINCIPAL THOMAS** *[***M2***] enters.)*

M2-PRINCIPAL THOMAS. Hey! What's going on in here?

F1-MS. HENDERSON. Zeus…uhh…I mean Principal Thomas.

M3-STUDENT. Ms. Henderson was telling us love stories!!!!!

M2-PRINCIPAL THOMAS. Really. Did she tell you about Eros and Psyche?

STUDENTS. *(afraid)* Nooooo!

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