

It's Always Sunny on Mount Olympus

Valerie Kamberova (head writer), Rory Baart, Evelien van der Cammen, Chai Fillerup

THE CHARACTERS

APHRODITE: The supposed protagonist. Unhappy with ZEUS's recent behaviour and taking the lead in tackling it. Generally confident in her spreading of love but now shaken due to recent events.

ZEUS: Pompous and theatrical. Quick to anger, he is both revered and feared. Deep inside, however, he hides a long-lost temperance...

DIONYSUS: Very poetic, especially when discussing drinks. Sometimes appears intoxicated, but mostly never is. Not very confident in his strength and a bit absent-minded, but (generally) a good friend.

ARTEMIS: Lesbian icon, vulgar and very confident. Here for your overly practical solutions to delicate problems.

ISMENE: Merely an old lady cleaning the temple, but not afraid of saying what is what, no matter to whom.

APOLLO: Broadway; very flamboyant and unsure of his dating life.

CIRCE: Evil witch, delighted by the misfortune of others, but secretly quite conscious and bitter of her own low standing in the pantheon's hierarchy.

HERMES: Fast-talking slimeball with bad jokes. Inexplicably to all, he is very sexually successful outside the immediate circle of gods. Possesses a social network second to none.

HADES: An accountant who copies the theatrical speeches of his brother, but delivers them with less passion. Surprisingly sweetly in love with his wife.

KOSMOS: An enigma of abject cosmological significance. Serves as the ultimate arbiter of fate, and narrates the shortcomings of the gods.

MORTALS 1, 2 & 3: Members of the temple of the gods, the latter two being brothers.

PRIESTESS: The high priestess of the temple of the gods. Devoted and stuck-up. Often scolds her SISTER.

SISTER: The PRIESTESS's sister. Considered promiscuous and unserious by her sister. Let KOSMOS be the judge of that

PERSEPHONE: HADES's wife. The voice of calm. A beacon of light and joyfulness.

THE LOCATION

Takes place across Mount Olympus and the mortal world. Key locations include the temple of the gods, APHRODITE's and ZEUS's chambers, CIRCE's lair, and a mortal festival.

THE TIME

Scenes 1-7 take place within the timeframe of a single day. Scenes 8-18 take place on the following day. The time can be fluid, so long as these stipulations are followed and ACT TWO begins either in the morning or early afternoon.

Scene 1. Intervention

KOSMOS: Dear gods, mortals, demigods, and monsters: tonight for you we have a tale! But this is not your usual kind of tale; tonight's play will not feature heroic feats, grand wars or any hapless mortal matters. No; this is a tale directly from Mount Olympus itself! Where the gods reside and squabble amongst themselves. Tonight we will witness such a squabble, which starts as many stories do, with a feast, and a Zeus...

[ZEUS and HERMES enter the stage wearing party hats, with closed curtains behind them.]

ZEUS: Did you hear, Hermes! The other gods have prepared a feast for me, in honor of all my great deeds! I must say, it's about time the other gods showed me some respect. After all, where do they think they would be without me to keep things running?

HERMES: Oh yes my lord, I heard great things. It will surely be fitting for your grandeur. It shall be the feast of feasts! Remembered for eons to come! Anything less will certainly not suffice.

ZEUS: It's rare for you to speak such wise words, Hermes. Good to hear that you are finally seeing who truly matters on Mount Olympus. Come, I can hear the other gods gathering. Let us head to the feast at once!

*[ZEUS and HERMES open the curtains, only to see all the other gods sitting awkwardly in a circle that is very apparently **not** a party. HERMES sarcastically blows on a party horn.]*

APHRODITE: Zeus... you're... you're early. Please, sit down.

ZEUS: What in my name is going on here? Do you call this a feast?

[ZEUS points at each individual god, berating them.]

ZEUS: Artemis, where are the boars you hunted! Apollo, why is it so silent, where is your music! Dionysus, what good is the god of wine if there is no wine!? And Hades, what made *you* suddenly crawl out of your hole...

Ward note: we should namedrop every god at least once to ensure the audience knows who every god is, except Aphrodite. Add a small place somewhere where Aphrodite is namedropped, maybe by Zeus when he walks in. Make it clear in the above line that Aphrodite is skipped.

HADES: Please, Zeus... have a seat. This need not be any harder than it already is.

ZEUS: Harder than it already is? What exactly is the meaning of this?

DIONYSUS: *You* are the point, Zeus! Everything surrounding you for a painfully long time. Your abundantly hurtful insults, your destructive temper tantrums, and basically *everything* about you. You just work, work and work... without consulting us in any matter that would ordinarily concern *all* of us. And the few times 'your highness' delegates any task to the rest of us, all we hear after is how you would have done it better!

APHRODITE: What Diony is *[gritting teeth and staring at Dionysus]* trying to say is, we need to have a talk. We feel like you have lost yourself in your work and this is reflecting on all of us. There is no more room for music, for drinks, for love! And if we do not take the time to appreciate these finer things, what is our work even worth?

ZEUS: What you lousy slobs have been failing to appreciate, while you were preparing your little intervention, is that my work ensures that the mortals remember us! In the last few months alone, I had to smite three kingdoms on my own for their sacrilege. And where were you while I was working to keep the mortals in check? Nowhere! I had to do it *ALL* on my own!

HADES: Brother, please calm down.

[HADES stands up and puts his arm around ZEUS.]

HADES *[whispering]:* All this work with the mortals... are you sure it has nothing to do with... *[inaudible]* *Ganymede*...?

[Thunder strikes in the background. Lights turn red.]

ZEUS *[enraged]:* Do not *DARE* mention that name again! This has *NOTHING* to do with what has been going on here!

[ZEUS composes himself. Lights turn to normal.]

ZEUS: I am *done* with this. Besides, there are more pressing matters I must attend to. Hermes, there is a message for you to deliver to the mortal kingdoms. Hades, you have been gone long enough, the underworld requires your attention. The rest of you... The rest of you, I demand a proper feast in my name. And do not *dare* disappoint me again.

HADES & HERMES: Yes, my lord.

[ZEUS, HADES, and HERMES exit the stage.]

ARTEMIS: Well that went...

APOLLO *[singsongy]*: Horribly. *[sarcastically]* Great showing Diony, really appreciated your ranting skills.

DIONYSUS: He deserved it! And for a god of music you sure were awfully quiet...

APHRODITE: Enough, the situation is bad enough without the rest of you at each others' throats. Please... just give me some time to think.

ARTEMIS: Well, I shall head off to my grove at once. I have some *business* to do.

APOLLO: *[Teasingly]* And so shall I.

[ARTEMIS and APOLLO exit the stage.]

DIONYSUS: Come on 'dite, let's scram.

[DIONYSUS puts his arm around APHRODITE brotherly and both exit the stage.]

Scene 2. A Lousy Sacrifice

*[ISMENE stands next to an altar with a sheep holding a knife. Before the altar stand the **PRIESTESS** and three **MORTALS**.]*

PRIESTESS: Oh, come-one-come-all, for we must not forget to thank the mighty Zeus for the good fortune that has befallen our kingdom. Oh, mighty Zeus! Chiefest among the gods—the greatest, all-seeing; the lord of all, the fulfiller who whispers words of wisdom to Themis as she sits leaning towards him. We thank thee...

MORTAL 1: Can you just get it over with? Grab the sheep and slit its throat. We have things to do!

MORTAL 2: Exactly, why do we pray to Zeus if he does not listen to us anyway?

PRIESTESS: People, have you gone mad? Have you forgotten what the Gods have done for us? If not for the gods, titans and monsters would rule this world. If not for Zeus—

MORTAL 3: No, it is you that has gone mad! You speak of all the gods have done for us, but only speak of old forgotten tales. All that we get from Mount Olympus nowadays is a thunderbolt if we miss even a single sacrifice, nothing more! Ismene, you understand us, don't you? Just slit the beast's throat. You remember what happened to Ganymede...

ISMENE: What happened to Ganymede had nothing to do with any of this. And besides, simple apathy towards Olympus will not solve anything. If we keep this up, the gods will crumble and we will fall alongside them.

MORTAL 1: Apathy from the gods is what got us here in the first place. I've already spent long enough here. Arguing in this temple will not put bread on the table. I am leaving.

MORTAL 2 & 3: So are we!

*[The three unnamed **MORTALS** leave the stage. **ISMENE** kneels behind the sheep and prepares to cut its throat.]*

ISMENE: Dear Zeus, most glorious of immortals, grant us some of your infinite strength to overcome our troubles. We have already asked much of you, yet we must ask for more. Please accept our most humble offering, which pales in comparison to your treasures. Only with your guidance can we overcome the obstacles ahead.

[ISMENE cuts the throat of the sheep.]

PRIESTESS: This cannot go on any longer. Those damned sinners, by Zeus, they will be the end of us yet!

ISMENE: But aren't they right? I mean, what have we gotten from the Olympians in the last few months? Our hunters hunt alone, our sailors have to brave grand storms, and there has not been a bountiful harvest for ages. Where is the love from the gods that was promised to us?

[HERMES walks on stage during ISMENE's speech.]

HERMES: Well love, I certainly can't provide. Besides, you're not my type.

ISMENE & PRIESTESS *[surprised]*: Lord Hermes!

HERMES: Yeah, yeah, whatever. Leave your surprise for later. Just like those mortals, I also have places to be. I came to deliver a message, from the almighty Zeus himself.

[HERMES holds out a scroll in front of him.]

HERMES *[doing a bad impression of Zeus]*: "Say this in my voice Hermes", oh maybe not that part. *[Scraping throat]*: "Dear mortals, be honored by receiving my personal attention. Consider yourself lucky, for most mortals will only catch slight attention from any god, yet alone the almighty Zeus." Get a load of this guy, am I right? Anyhow, yada-yada-yada, something about not enough sacrifices. Something-something, consequences to follow. Deadline is in 3 days, else the kingdom shall be cursed for a month of storms. Damn, what kind of god would do that? Cursing a kingdom for unceasing months of rain?

ISMENE: See what I mean? Something is going on on Mount Olympus!

PRIESTESS: Shut your mouth Ismene! You're speaking in the presence of a god.

ISMENE: I shall not! We cannot bury our heads in the sand! Please lord Hermes, hear our plea! Where have the gods gone, where is the love in the

world? Surely the gods understand that they need us as much as we need them!

HERMES: Well, need is a very big word. But I see your point. The mortal world feels a lot more tame than I remember. Gosh, how long has it been since I had to interrupt an orgy to deliver a message? Makes work a hell of a lot easier, let me tell you that. But, I do miss it... Alright, I will take this up to Mount Olympus. The gods will hear of what is transpiring in the mortal world. Worry not, Hermes will fix things! Oh, and by the way dear, beware of the blood. Red is not your color.

[HERMES leaves the stage. ISMENE and the PRIESTESS leave the stage right after.]

Scene 3. Hermes's Report

[DIONYSUS and APHRODITE enter the stage, both holding a piece of paper.]

APHRODITE: Did you see what Hermes reported about the mortal realm? This is all Zeus's doing, I am telling you! His short temper will be the ruin of us all. If only he were as easy to please as a mortal... You usually give them someone to love and the problem just fixes itself! But Zeus? Zeus only loves himself.

DIONYSUS: 'Dite, 'Dite, 'Dite. Calm down for a bit, your vibe is way off. I'm sure Hermes is exaggerating. I mean, the mortals love me! Just let me go down there, have a drink, talk it over with everyone, and everything will be good.

APHRODITE: Diony... you know I love you. But did you read a single sentence of Hermes' message? The vineyards are all closed down due to fear of Zeus's upcoming storm. There is almost no wine left to drink!

[Long pause. DIONYSUS freezes for a few seconds, then speaks.]

DIONYSUS: Ok, let's fuck this bitch up.

APHRODITE: Finally! But how? We already tried to get through his thick skull without any success. And now, we also have to deal with his demand for "a proper feast in his name." How the hell do we deal with such a narcissistic arsehole?

[APOLLO can be heard from offstage.]

Apollo [offstage]: Is that music to my ear I hear? "Dealing with a narcissistic arsehole." Aphrodite, how do you always know what I need in my life?

[APOLLO and ARTEMIS enter.]

ARTEMIS: Cut the poetic crap. Show me where to point my arrow and it's gonna fly-y-y, baby. I'll even shoot an extra one, as long as it's aimed at Zeus's forehead.

APOLLO: Artemis, not everything can be fixed with violence. Maybe Zeus just needs a soft shoulder to lie on, a conversation with a good friend, some music, and maybe some poetry?

ARTEMIS *[scoffing]*: You planning to fuck him or something? No, Zeus is gonna get what he deserves.

DIONYSUS: Maybe Apollo is somewhat right. Zeus just needs to let his hair down, and I know just the thing to help him with that. A party! With wine flowing like a waterfall, straight from the best vineyards in all of Greece. Not even the god of stubbornness would be able to resist such a temptation.

ARTEMIS: A party; surely you don't want to give that pompous asshole exactly what he wants?

APHRODITE: This might actually work. Zeus has just forgotten what makes our works beautiful. We need to remind him of the beauty of music, of the pleasures of wine, and most importantly: what it means to love! We'll give him a feast, the feast of feasts! And not just for the Olympians: invite every god, every titan, even the mortals!

APOLLO: While I love blind enthusiasm as much as the next hopeless romantic, don't the mortals hate us? What Hermes told us left little for the imagination.

APHRODITE: Oh, don't you worry about that. *[slyly, yet sternly]* I know just how to make mortals do what I need from them.

Scene 4. Party Preparation

*[The gods are preparing for a grand feast for **ZEUS**. It is going quite well.]*

APOLLO *[singing a scale]*: Ah yes, this will do marvelously! I'll stand here and just...

*[**APOLLO** strikes a pose.]*

ARTEMIS: Hey bro, starting yoga again?

APOLLO: Arty! In flannel plaid again, what a daring choice. No, I'm location-scouting for Zeus's grand feast. Look, we can observe the humans getting ready for their little festival from here.

ARTEMIS: Ugh those feasts and festivals, they're too formal of an affair. Did you know they built me a temple? Me, the goddess of the outdoors. No, I'll stick to the woods.

APOLLO: Temples are what the almighty Zeus prescribes...

ARTEMIS: Oh yeah, Zeus... remember that chick I told you about?

APOLLO: Chick? You mean the sister of Zeus's head priestess? You didn't.

ARTEMIS: We went for a long walk through nature, if you know what I mean...

APOLLO: *That* was your business? I...

ARTEMIS: I mean we *[mouthing]* fuuuuucked.

APOLLO: Yes, I figured. Zeus won't like that, you know.

ARTEMIS: For aages; I think she had her birthday halfway through...

APOLLO: Hah! You know, the mortals believe you're not into all that.

ARTEMIS *[annoyed]*: Ugh, the men you mean; just because it doesn't involve them... Speaking of men, didn't you bring one to that coronation last week? The one where Zeus zapped the last king?

APOLLO *[dreamily]*: Oh, he was marvellous! Oh, and not a man, one of Poseidon's many halfies. He looked stunning though, we shared so many stolen glances, he even touched my foot with his under the table. Oh!

ARTEMIS: Okay, but did you get anywhere?

APOLLO: Wha— On a first date?!

ARTEMIS: Oh, popple-pops, with that attitude, you're never getting laid. If we are actually considering what the mortals think of us, *you* are just a god of music, art, and poetry!

APOLLO: I *am*!

ARTEMIS: Well, fine. I'm just saying that if they saw your private sketches, those statues you inspire them to make would have a lot more going on *[gesturing at crotch]* here.

APOLLO: I'm just waiting for the right guy, a prince who slays some mighty beast for me... Don't you want someone who stays?

ARTEMIS *[winking]*: Eh, I prefer eating a varied diet of wild beasts. But you dream on, bro. Someday, your prince will come.

APOLLO: Ah, *someday*... I know, I'll write a song about this longing!

[APOLLO walks off musing about the lyrics.]

ARTEMIS *[sighing]*: There goes the god of not getting laid.

[ARTEMIS shakes her head.]

ARTEMIS: Oh yeah, feast. Guess I should put some meat on the table.

[ARTEMIS grabs her bow and heads off stage. APHRODITE walks in from the same side and glances back. HADES enters from the other side.]

APHRODITE: Well, that part seems to take care of itself. Hades, I assume you're not bringing anything, right?

HADES: Well, my domain is not generally considered too festive by the rest of you. But let me think... Ah, I know! I'll make sourdough bread. I'm overdue to feed the starter again anyway...

APHRODITE: Bread?

[DIONYSUS perks up and walks over.]

DIONYSUS: Hold up. You, Hades, king of the underworld, ruler of the dead... You bake bread?

HADES *[insulted]*: It's a perfectly normal hobby. As a matter of fact, I took it up a few seasons ago, when Persephone was at her mother's. It gets dreadfully boring when she's away.

DIONYSUS: I think I need some more wine to believe this. Where do you even get the grain?

APHRODITE: Diony dear, remember who he's married to.

DIONYSUS: Ah, right.

HADES: Yes, Persephone brings back plenty each year. The one good thing that comes from her absence. The underworld misses her when she's away, I think I'm too serious on my own—it gets gloomy. She brings levity and, metaphorically speaking, liveliness.

DIONYSUS: Yes, you two always seemed like a good match that way.

APHRODITE: Why, thank you.

[DIONYSUS throws her a disappointed look.]

DIONYSUS: So, back to this bread of yours. There's the grain which you get from Persephone, and then... water?

HADES: I happen to have a river.

APHRODITE: The Styx? Is that... safe?

HADES: It evaporates before you eat the bread. Perfectly safe, I assure you. Now, while kneading, I have to wear gloves of course. But I've never forgotten to put those on... I think.

APHRODITE *[slightly disgusted]*: Okay then, sourdough bread it is. Diony, how are we on drinks?

DIONYSUS: It's been a real struggle, but I managed to not drink some and save it for the feast. Follow me.

Ward note: I managed to save some, from myself.

[The three of them head behind the curtains.]

Scene 5. Human perspective

*[The **PRIESTESS** is straightening candles and statues on the altar when her **SISTER** stumbles in, plucking branches from her hair and setting her clothes straight. In the background, **ISMENE** is sweeping.]*

PRIESTESS: The yearly Pantheic Festival is almost upon us, all preparations have been completed, and now my useless sister finally shows her face again. You were gone for days! Where were you?!

SISTER: I'm sorry, I lost track of time. I was in the woods and, well...

PRIESTESS: The woods? Weren't you going to the shrine of Artemis? I inquired; no one saw you there.

SISTER: I said I was going away for worship, not that I was headed to the shrine. Hers is the wilderness, why would I worship at a shrine?

PRIESTESS *[in a monotone, flat summation]:* Worship is to happen at official shrines registered with the local polis. Sacrifices are to be provided at regular, set times determined by the head priest. Suitable sacrifices are products within the god's domain. This pleases the gods.

ISMENE: We know lord Zeus prefers it that way, but Artemis *is* the goddess of the hunt and the wilderness. Perhaps worship in the woods works for her just as well?

PRIESTESS: She probably didn't even make a proper sacrifice!

SISTER *[suggestively]:* She sure seemed to enjoy what I had to offer...

*[The **PRIESTESS** leaves exasperated.]*

SISTER: She and Zeus are made for each other.

ISMENE: She's under a lot of pressure. But, did I understand correctly that you... *[choosing words carefully]* saw Artemis? In physical form, I mean.

SISTER: Yes. Oh gods, and what a formidable physique... Please don't tell my sister! I know it's not how it's supposed to go, and I know the tales of how it usually ends. But I mean, if you had the chance, wouldn't you?

ISMENE: Oh, I don't think I have anything the gods could want. I'm old, and I just mop the floor.

SISTER: Don't be that way! You're always here for everyone, she'd be lucky to have you.

[MORTALS 2 and 3 walk in, loudly talking about their plans.]

MORTAL 2: We *have* to visit the parade, it's the opening event!

MORTAL 3: No that's where all the boring people go, the real party is *always* a side event. I heard the Hades crew are throwing a totally lit underground rave. It's well-illuminated!

ISMENE: Boys, boys, inside voices, please. And be careful walking around the altar, our priestess just set up everything for tonight's offering.

MORTAL 3: Oh hey, Miss Ismene. Sorry for the ruckus. We're making plans for the weekend. Where are you planning to go?

ISMENE: Well, back in the day we used to have a wild moonlit chase through the woods for Pan, and of course, there was Aphrodite's combat tournament...

MORTAL 2: Combat... for Aphrodite?!

ISMENE: She used to be more into that sort of thing. Supposedly, she got hurt in the great war and lost her appetite for it. But off with you now, lest I have to sweep this floor all over again.

[The two MORTALS leave one way, ISMENE and the PRIESTESS's SISTER the other.]

Scene 6. The Feast

KOSMOS: Pipers paid, sourdough baked, and love songs sung, the Gods enjoy the feast they so painstakingly worked to prepare. Happy with their work, they could not have expected Zeus's more-than-festive mood. Those poor gods... It will be a slaughter.

[KOSMOS laughs mysteriously. Onstage, ARTEMIS is lounging, looking down at the crowd as ZEUS appears and walks up to her.]

ZEUS: Artemis! All this lounging about is not for me. I crave some good old competition! What say you, do you have some feats of strength or skill we could partake in?

[ARTEMIS yawns and gets up.]

ARTEMIS: Sure, I'm game. *[looking around]* Ah, do you see that ass over there?

[ARTEMIS gestures at the back of the audience.]

ZEUS: Which one? I see many "asses."

ARTEMIS: The one at the back, it's all spotted and looks a bit droopy.

ZEUS: Ah, the one that looks old and a lot hairier than the others? It's a bit scrawny.

ARTEMIS: That's the one. Watch.

[ARTEMIS steps forward and shoots her bow, staring after it and then turning to ZEUS with a satisfied look.]

ARTEMIS: Your turn, Zeusy-boy. Let's see your aim. I'll even give you a bigger target. See that large ass over there in the middle?

[ARTEMIS points to the middle of the audience, ZEUS following her gesture.]

ZEUS: Ah, I think I see the one you mean. That's a good, thick ass, a worthy offering to us! I can already tell it is one juicy ass, a great addition to our feast!

ARTEMIS *[surprised]*: Hah, calm down, you have to hit it first.

[ZEUS steps back and rolls up his sleeves.]

ARTEMIS: Wait, what are you—

[Thunder and a flash of lightning appear. All goes dark until the light returns to normal. ZEUS is beaming.]

ZEUS: Got 'em.

ARTEMIS: You got the entire herd! Those were the last asses on this entire continent, and they're turned to ash now!

ZEUS: Well. Asses to ashes, dust to dust. And don't you take that tone with me, Artemis. This was your competition. In fact, there are plenty of asses still around. Look at those there, with the humans. *[sneering]* Plenty of donkeys left.

ARTEMIS *[fuming]*: You— Dear Zeus, those asses here *[gestures at the front of audience]* are *domesticated* asses. I. Hunt. Wild. Ass.

ZEUS: Well, they were unworthy targets anyway. Go hunt your big cats; I'm going to get a drink.

[ARTEMIS leaves exasperated. ZEUS heads the other way. Shortly after, DIONYSUS and APOLLO come out chatting.]

DIONYSUS: Well, my boy, I think I see your problem. You have to be clear about your intentions, about what you want from your man.

APOLLO: What do you mean? Stolen glances! Romantic dinners! That nail-biting tension of will they, won't they! That is what I want!

DIONYSUS: Yes, yes, so say that it's a "will they" situation, and you really like him and you had those dinners. How do you clearly show that you're ready to take things further?

APOLLO: ...Further?

[DIONYSUS makes a humping motion. APOLLO looks mortified.]

APOLLO: I couldn't!

DIONYSUS: Well I've seen how they look at you, they need but the smallest hint to jump into bed with you.

APOLLO: I know, that's the problem!

[They sit down on the steps.]

DIONYSUS: Don't you want them to?

APOLLO: I don't know... Maybe at some point, but they're all too eager for it: I can see it in their eyes. It's intimidating. I just want to cuddle...! For eternity...

DIONYSUS: Ah, I suppose you're looking for a different type of man. *[sparking an idea]* You know, across the sea there are people who have chopped *[gesturing at crotch]* all that off. That'd solve your problem.

APOLLO: There's no point, you know how the Egyptian gods are... That crocodile would have my head if I stole one of theirs... But I get your point.

[They both sit and ponder for a bit. ZEUS enters, spotting DIONYSUS.]

APOLLO: Uh-oh... I mean, hi Zeus!

ZEUS: Ah, Dionysus, just the god I was looking for.

[DIONYSUS looks up, panicked.]

APOLLO *[hurriedly]*: Well, I'll leave you two to it... Thanks for the talk, Diony!

[APOLLO gets up and quickly leaves as ZEUS amicably sits down next to an uncomfortable DIONYSUS.]

DIONYSUS: Heyyyy Zeus, what's up? Enjoying your feast? Looks like even the humans are getting into it. I think it's one of their festivals today...

ZEUS: Oh, Dionysus, the god of lazing about with drinks. I just handily beat Artemis in a game of hunting. Is there anything in which you might dare to challenge me?

DIONYSUS: It's a festival, who needs to compete? Let's just sit and have a drink together.

ZEUS: A drinking contest! What a grand idea. And I'm sure one you are proficient in.

DIONYSUS: That's not what I... Eh, sure, why not? Here, I have some lovely wine made by Calista herself.

[DIONYSUS pours some wine and hands a glass to ZEUS. They both drink, but ZEUS rapidly drains his glass.]

ZEUS: More! Keep up, Dionysus, the contest just started!

DIONYSUS: I'm trying to savour the taste, it's not all about quantity, this stuff is hard to come by! Calista can be fickle...

ZEUS: Nonsense! More is better! Here, this will help us up the ante.

[ZEUS hands over two large solid pints and DIONYSUS reluctantly pours. They drink, ZEUS goes fast, and DIONYSUS unhappily follows along.]

DIONYSUS *[trying to get out of the contest]*: Oh, I think we ran out of wine... Well, this was fun.

ZEUS: Don't fret, I came prepared. Here I have some... beer, I believe... and there's lots of it! No one else seemed to touch it!

DIONYSUS: I wonder why...

[ZEUS pours the "beer" and they clink their pints. They start drinking, but DIONYSUS quickly stops, looking like he just had the worst sip of his life.]

ZEUS: Don't stop!

DIONYSUS *[exaggerating and trying to hide his disgust]*: Oh nooo, this has been more alcohol than I can handle. You win, oh great god of gods. I shall retire in shame.

*[**DIONYSUS** plays at drunkenly getting up, walks off behind **ZEUS** then shakes his head looking back. Some moments later, **ZEUS** gets up unevenly, struggles to walk, and stumbles off the stage.]*

Scene 7. A Chance Meeting

*[The two **MORTAL** brothers hobble in, supporting one another.]*

MORTAL 2: That was... kind of bad actually.

MORTAL 3: At least we got a refill before we left.

[They sip their beers and recoil in disgust.]

MORTAL 3: Fuck! Nevermind, this is undrinkable.

MORTAL 2: Is this actual piss?

MORTAL 3: I think I'm gonna be sick.

*[The boys head off, supporting each other. The **PRIESTESS** walks in and looks around. **ISMENE** walks in behind her.]*

PRIESTESS: Oh... I hadn't even noticed in all the tumult. All this mess. The shrine hall, it's... it's...

ISMENE: It's a swine stall. But don't you worry about it, you're barely standing on your feet as is. I'll clean and lock up.

*[The **PRIESTESS** nods and leaves. **ISMENE** grabs a broom and starts sweeping. After some time of silent sweeping, **ZEUS** appears from behind the curtains and quietly stumbles down the stairs.]*

ZEUS: You, tell me. Where is my priestess? I must speak with her.

ISMENE: She's sleeping, after a long day of service. You will not wake her.

Ward note: change above to: She's sleeping, after a long day of service in your name. Do not wake her.

ZEUS: You have courage, speaking to your god in such a manner. At another time I might have struck you down, but it's been a long night, and I've grown tired..

[ZEUS sits down on a throne and slumps.]

ISMENE: My lord Zeus, what has brought you to such ire tonight? Were the sacrifices not as requested?

ZEUS: They were, they were. Though somehow less effective each passing year. We need more, and the other gods don't take it seriously. They laze about drinking, toying with love, playing in the forest. And once more it's down to me to keep things going, to keep us all safe.

ISMENE: I cannot imagine what responsibilities weigh so heavily on the gods.

ZEUS: Indeed you cannot.

ISMENE: But, perhaps I could share something of what happens here? How things are among us mortals?

ZEUS: I will hear your words.

[ISMENE starts speaking as ZEUS slowly drifts away into dreamland.]

ISMENE: With each season, we have more rules around the sacrifices. Where they must take place, at what times, what is to be offered. People do it, mostly, but... I think there's no heart in it this way. When I was younger, we relished attending these festivals, the rituals spoke to us spiritually. Now, the youth does anything to escape the official events. Perhaps... perhaps you could rely on those aspects of the other gods that add passion, lighten your load by doing it their way? I mean, we could really do with some better weather, our hunters would be—

[ISMENE turns around and finds ZEUS asleep on the throne. She walks up to him and observes him for a bit.]

ISMENE: My lord, asleep in his temple. That's a first I think. *[pondering]* People speak of your anger and judgment, but now that I've seen you, I think I see worry above all. Well, sleep and forget them for a while, I'll keep anyone returning from the festival out.

[ISMENE walks off as ZEUS remains sleeping on the throne.]

Scene 8. Hangover

[APHRODITE, DIONYSUS, APOLLO, and ARTEMIS are lounging on the stage, completely drained and wrecked by the festival.]

KOSMOS *[sarcastically]*: Oh, what a sorry sight! Our gods' puny little scheme seemed to do nothing less than invigorate the all-mighty Zeus. Poor Dionysus, outdrunk. Apollo, outclassed. Aphrodite, out of love to pass. And Artemis, out of ass to love. What will our gods proceed to do now? We shall see...

APHRODITE: Dionysus...

DIONYSUS *[groaning, hungover]*: Hngh...

APHRODITE: Dionysus!

DIONYSUS: *[moaning tiredly]* Ugh, what...

APOLLO: This didn't seem to go like we wanted it to... We–

ARTEMIS *[bursting out]*: We got fucked, Apollo! Zeus was supposed to relax, and he fucked all of us up instead! What will he think of us *now*?! Dionysus couldn't hold down a single swig of piss beer–

DIONYSUS *[still moaning]*: hey...! That beer was so... shit. It was shit.

ARTEMIS: Sorry, Diony... *[breaking down]* That fucker *lit up* my dating pool! With lightning! No ass left for Artemis... Fuck!

APHRODITE: We can't just give up... Dionysus, get up! I think I have another–*Oh* my god, you look horrific.

[DIONYSUS holds up a thumbs up while slouching towards the ground.]

APOLLO: Dite? You were saying?

APHRODITE: Yes, I saw something. He was speaking to someone... I've crossed lovers within the church, I can find out who she is. He seemed...

mellow... After she left, I snuck back around, and I saw him sleeping... He looked... almost tranquil. *[pondering]* Almost like before...

DIONYSUS: *[groaning]* Dite that's great, but I really need to go offload some of the piss beer.

APHRODITE: What?

ARTEMIS: He needs to puke!

[DIONYSUS walks off stage.]

APOLLO: What if... you compel him to fall in love with her? You said he seemed to listen to her, at least more than to us, so perhaps she is the key to our perilous journey.

APHRODITE: Compel? But, I cannot make him fall in love; he is too powerful! He'll have my neck before I get a woman to leave a hickey on his!

DIONYSUS *[offstage]:* Brew him a love potion! He'll drink anything, even piss!

[DIONYSUS audibly vomits offstage.]

APOLLO: Marvelous idea, Dionysus! Yes, Aphrodite, that seems proper. Can you do it?

ARTEMIS *[lying on her back and shouting]:* C'mon, Dite, if Dio can brew his puke wine—

DIONYSUS: *[shouting from off-stage]* Hey!

ARTEMIS: —then you can find someone to brew a love potion.

APOLLO: You can do it, Dite. You're the only one he didn't wreck last night! You are the only one we can entrust given our current... condition.

APHRODITE: Well, I suppose...

ARTEMIS: Good! Now go, I think I'm gonna be joining Dio in a minute.... Dionysus! Hurry it up in there!

Scene 9. Asking Hermes

HERMES: Aphrodite!

APHRODITE: Hermes, thank heavens! You came quickly!

HERMES: I most certainly do not, but yes—I am here. I heard about the disaster last night. Who knew old Zeus had it in him! So, I checked your... sources; raunchy fellas I must say! They all point to Zeus's head priestess. Tall, beautiful, powerful. That must be your gal. Certainly should be up to Zeus's standards!

APHRODITE: Hermes, I can't do this. The others have asked me to brew a love potion, a concoction so strong that it will make Zeus fall in love and realize that he can't keep being a degrading bastard to everybody... But I can't. Love is sacred. I cannot bring myself to force it; if I do, will I not be just as bad as him? Yet, I can't let the others down...

HERMES: Oh, Aphrodite. Let me turn that frown upside-down! *[she glares at him]* Ne-evermind, do you remember Circe? The enchantress? I heard that she concocts some nasty brews, maybe she can help you with your... situation.

APHRODITE: Circe? Oh, Hermes, she won't even look at me! That old witch thinks I'm too uppity for her... I-I... I *can't* ask her for help!

HERMES: All the better. I used to deliver virgin blonde hair—*[offhandedly]* don't ask—to her for her *endeavours*. She's a fan of big bad Hermes. Let me work my charm; you'll have your potion in no time

[APHRODITE turns away from him, relieved by his offer to help. While she is not looking at him, HERMES quickly zips away.]

APHRODITE: Oh? How kind of you! Are you sure? *[turning back]* Aaand he's gone.

Scene 10. Hying Aphrodite

ARTEMIS: The plan isn't to laze around while Hermes begs Circe for help, is it?

APOLLO *[sighing]*: ...why did we even entrust him with the integrity of the plan...?

APHRODITE: Because we have no other option, Apollo! We have to do something radical... *[under her nose]* ...and he runs fast...

DIONYSUS: She's right, Apollo – Zeus won't listen to reason, so we have to make him unreasonable. We have to make him fall in love with his own head priestess, it's the only way to show him he's not above it all; to show him that he's not unlike us. You should've seen him last night!

APOLLO: I just hope this works out. I have festive games to lead – who else will bring the music?! The mortals cannot sing my hymns without me, and I for one would like to be there on time to hear the poetry category.

DIONYSUS: Here's a piece of poetry for you, my friend: "the Olympian who leaves first... *[off-handedly and rushed]* comes last," now sit tight and don't worry your artsy little head over what Hermes does or doesn't. He's a young lad – old hags are all over him. He'll come back and then... Aphrodite can handle it!

APHRODITE: Me?!

DIONYSUS: Well who else, darling? You're the goddess of love, just do your thing and... lovify him or something. Swoon him. I mean, forcing that potion down his throat shouldn't be too difficult. I mean... *[suggestively]* you are ready to do anything for the cause, right?

[DIONYSUS holds up his hand while maintaining eye contact with APHRODITE. ARTEMIS high-fives him.]

ARTEMIS: Nice!

APHRODITE *[scoldingly]*: Dionysus!

DIONYSUS: Alright, alright, *worth a try*. Look, put the potion in a wine bottle. Trust me, he'll guzzle it right down, he has that hound in him. I am honestly impressed... and a bit scared. By the end I thought we'd run out of beer and he'd start guzzling actual horse piss!

APHRODITE: I—I'm not sure...

APOLLO: Dite, come on. He won't suspect a thing.

ARTEMIS [*chiming in*]: Kiss ass if you need to.

APHRODITE: Artemis!

ARTEMIS [*patronizingly*]: Aphrodite?

APHRODITE: I— [*sighing*] suppose I can do this.

DIONYSUS: That's my 'Dite! So, we have a plan!

[**HERMES** appears on stage from behind the curtain, looking rustled, clothes almost torn apart.]

HERMES [*with a dead expression*]: Circe agreed to help.

APOLLO: Whoa, lad. What happened to you?

HERMES: Please don't. Aphrodite. Go. While she's still... [*voice quivering*]
In the mood.

[**APHRODITE**, shocked, pauses for a slight moment.]

APHRODITE: ...fine.

Scene 11. The Tale of Scarves

[ISMENE is sitting on a bench, knitting. ZEUS approaches her, silently.]

ISMENE: Good afternoon, my lord! The priestess is out at the moment. But have a seat, it's yours as is everything.

[ZEUS sits down next to her and looks at the floor solemnly.]

ISMENE: What's the matter? You look like you've seen a ghost.

ZEUS: Ismene... do you ever ponder the significance of others in your life?

ISMENE: How so?

ZEUS: I was a believer in solitude. Solemnity. Beings were no more important than the scum brewing in a city sewage. And then... I was a believer in my own change.

ISMENE: How did you change?

ZEUS: I became fond of people. Of someone. Of him... *[under his nose, quietly]* of Ganymede... No, I became careless. Complacent. Human...

ISMENE: What happened?

ZEUS *[furiously jumping up]:* I paid the price for that complacency! Through my carelessness I let it get destroyed. I won't again.

ISMENE *[startled, but calming down]:* Well, *[jokingly]* as a human, we're all a bit too careless sometimes. You know how many scarves I've ruined before I even finished one? *[chuckling]* My poor father was freezing all winter... I hope I do not ruin this one, but I might. And if I do, I will simply start again. For every accident that happens in my knitting, someone who wants a scarf will have to wait longer. Yet all I can do is keep knitting, for one scarf is better than none. *[sarcastically]* Again, ask my father.

[ISMENE giggles softly, and smiles while knitting. ZEUS looks at her bewildered, then gets up to leave.]

ZEUS [*softly*]: Thank you for your tale of scarves. I have to go, but I will return.

ISMENE: Thank you for sharing this with me, lord Zeus.

Scene 12. Circe's potion

[APHRODITE walks into CIRCE's lair. The smell is putrid, and she scrunches her nose in disgust. CIRCE notices her and gives off a witch's laugh.]

CIRCE: There she is! The Goddess, slash betrayer of morals, slash *liar*.

APHRODITE: You do not want to set me off, Circe. You are the least of my problems, and the easiest to punch.

CIRCE: Kick your heels, Goddess. No need for hostilities; I only mean to talk.

APHRODITE: Talk? Or belittle me?

CIRCE: Oh, you know you're not as dumb as you look, you can surely figure it out.

APHRODITE *[insulted]*: Whatever. Do you have *it*?

CIRCE: Have what? An insatiable appetite for your friend Hermes? Why yes, that little lightning was quick to get me working on your commission. Come to think of it, *[teasingly]* what was I preparing for you?

APHRODITE: You know what.

CIRCE: I want you to say it.

APHRODITE: A potion.

CIRCE: What kind of potion?

APHRODITE *[choking on her words]*: A love potion.

CIRCE: *[circling around her like a vulture]* I'm sorry? *[patronizingly]* My hearing isn't what it used to be, you know?

APHRODITE *[shouting]*: A love potion!

CIRCE: Bravo, dear! Let's not pretend you're nobler than me, miss holier-than-thou. You walked into my chambers as if I were disgusting *[emphasizing]* shit on your heel. You should drop the high attitude and show some appreciation. I *am* saving your ass, after all.

APHRODITE *[rolling her eyes and sighing]*: Fine, Circe, you win—thank you.

CIRCE: Naturally.

[CIRCE looks back at her cauldron, walks over, puts on a glove, and scoops out a bottle of her concoction.]

CIRCE: Now all I need to finish this little love-maker is a strand of your celestially romantic hair.

APHRODITE: What?! No way in Hades am I letting you anywhere near me.

CIRCE: Just a tiny pluck. Or no potion at all.

APHRODITE: One day I will make you pay, wretch. Here is your dastardly hair.

CIRCE: Much obliged, dear.

[CIRCE mumbles a few words in an unknown magical language, and then seals the potion, carefully handing it over to APHRODITE, leaving her hair unused.]

CIRCE: Enjoy, oath-breaker.

APHRODITE *[pointing towards the unused strand of hair]*: And my hair?

CIRCE *[putting the strand into a pouch]*: A souvenir.

APHRODITE: You lowly—

CIRCE *[interrupting her]*: Don't blame me for your own fraud, *[emphasizing]* HOGess. *[cruelly and sarcastically]* You must be so embarrassed! Wanna talk about it? Well, I don't. Get yourself a therapist, and *[shouting]* leave my sight!

[APHRODITE, shocked, hurt, and upset, tries to say something for a few moments, but words fail to come out of her mouth. She then hastily leaves, ashamed.]

Scene 13. Zeus' Chambers

[APHRODITE is sitting in ZEUS's room, potion in hand. A bottle of wine is set next to her feet. DIONYSUS is looking around the corner, standing as a lookout. A walk-in wardrobe is seen on stage, possibly the stage curtain]

DIONYSUS: 'Dite, pour the potion quickly! If Zeus catches you in his room, I'm gonna have to pick your pretty little smithereens off the walls! I just washed this robe! *[pointing towards the "wardrobe"]* Don't make me steal one of Zeus's... They won't fit!

APHRODITE: Let's hope this works, Diony... I'm glad you're here with me.

DIONYSUS: Of course! That's what friends are for, aren't they?

[Loud footsteps are heard off-stage. DIONYSUS looks at the closet on stage.]

DIONYSUS: Lordy, the lord is coming! Sorry Dite, you're on your own!
[sighing] Back in the closet I go!

[DIONYSUS hides in the closet. APHRODITE looks at him, speechless at the betrayal, and quickly pours the potion into the wine, hiding the empty vial behind her back. ZEUS enters.]

ZEUS: Aphrodite, what are you doing in my chambers?! Explain yourself.

APHRODITE *[apologetically]*: Zeus! Look, I know you don't have the greatest respect for my craft, and I wanted to try to mend things by bringing you Dio's best wine. He told me you were quite a big fan at the party?

ZEUS *[flustered]*: What did he tell you?! Believe me, I would rather let the skies crumble down and rend the earth than come near that vile poison. Now get out of my chambers!

APHRODITE: Zeus, I—

ZEUS: Out!

[APHRODITE, on the verge of tears, quickly leaves the room. ZEUS sighs, takes off his robe, and goes to hang it in his closet. He notices DIONYSUS.]

DIONYSUS: Zeuuuus! How pleasant! What lovely flowing robes you have!

[ZEUS freezes.]

DIONYSUS: I'll take my leave.

ZEUS *[exploding]:* Stay. How dare you?! Oh, count your lucky days, for I will make sure to—*[struggling to think of a punishment]* make sure to... Just, get out.

DIONYSUS *[surprised]:* No punishment? But... Yep, I'll just go!

[ZEUS stares at DIONYSUS for a couple of seconds. DIONYSUS is frozen, hoping ZEUS won't reconsider and smite him. ZEUS sighs.]

ZEUS: And stop talking about last night.

[ZEUS storms off, flustered.]

DIONYSUS: Well, we got off lucky. Did that just happen? Dite, did you see—oh, right.

[He places down an identical bottle of wine next to him, completely not noticing the love-wine-potion.]

DIONYSUS: The god of grump himself... I wonder what has gotten into him. He was especially... *un-cruel* to Dite as well. Hah, maybe lord grumpy is finally learning!

[He looks around for his wine bottle, and notices that there are actually two wine bottles next to him now.]

DIONYSUS: Ohh, shi—*[interacting with the audience, be creative!]* Which one was it again...? Left or right? *[the audience answers, he takes the wrong one]* Ah, that one!

[With the love potion in hand, DIONYSUS makes his exit.]

Scene 14. Potion Mishaps

[ARTEMIS and the high PRIESTESS are on stage, in the mortal realm. The PRIESTESS is madly swooning over her. APHRODITE enters.]

APHRODITE: Artemis! Oh. I see you've given her the love potion already.

[ARTEMIS pushes the PRIESTESS's head away from her, but she keeps trying to approach her like a child/zombie.]

ARTEMIS: Yeah, yeah. Gramps better get here quick—the potion seems to be an acquired taste, and this chick has acquired a taste for me instead.

APHRODITE: Is she... Going to be okay?

ARTEMIS: Oh baby, no one is okay after I reject them.

APHRODITE *[flustered]*: Right, that's for sure what I was asking, so where is Zeus?

ARTEMIS: Should be coming right about... *[ZEUS walks in]* now.

ZEUS: You two? *[air quotes]* "Living it up" with the mortals? Why am I surprised... *[noticing the bumbling PRIESTESS]* Priestess?!

APHRODITE: Why yes! It *is* the priestess, waiting for you: her mighty lord Zeus! Would you... care... to join her company?

[ISMENE enters the stage behind ZEUS.]

ZEUS: What? I have no time for these charades, I must meet—Ismene!

ISMENE: Lord Zeus! Such a pleasure seeing you here! *[noticing the PRIESTESS]* ...priestess? Are you alright?

PRIESTESS *[slurring her words]*: Oh, Ismene!! You look *sooo* wonderful today... You know... I do enjoy myself a bit of *[as if an actual sexual innuendo (it is not)]* "janitor play."

ISMENE: Oookay, Priestess, not in front of lord Zeus...

PRIESTESS: Don't play hard to geeet... I will getcha! I will... Ooh, lady Artemis...

ARTEMIS: Aaand she's lost the plot.

*[The **PRIESTESS**'s **SISTER** enters the stage.]*

PRIESTESS: Sis?? Gods, that robe looks sooo good on you...

ARTEMIS *[whispering to **APHRODITE**]:* This isn't working. Something's wrong with the potion.

SISTER: Here, sister, let me take you home.

PRIESTESS: Ohh, sis, take me *NOW*!!

*[Carrying her, the **PRIESTESS**'s **SISTER** walks off the stage with her in tow.]*

ZEUS: What just... You know, I have not the time for this. Ismene! I need to talk to you...

ISMENE *[still bewildered]:* Of... course! Lord Zeus...

*[The two exit the stage with **ZEUS** leading the way, **ISMENE** barely keeping up.]*

ARTEMIS: What... just happened?

APHRODITE: I think we gave the potion to the wrong woman.

ARTEMIS *[frustrated]:* The cleaning lady, *really*?! Goddamn Hermes... And Zeus didn't seem affected at all either!

APHRODITE: But I left the potion in his chambers...

*[**DIONYSUS** enters the stage, drunken with love.]*

DIONYSUS: Zeussy! Wait for me, baby! I need to be smitten... Rawr!

*[**DIONYSUS** chases after **ZEUS**. A long pause on stage.]*

ARTEMIS: Fuck.

Scene 15. Changes

[ZEUS and ISMENE rush on stage, ISMENE now leading the way, then slow down. ISMENE shakes her hand in pain as if she hit something.]

ISMENE: Ow... Here, this is a nice and quiet spot.

ZEUS: My heavens, what a mess was that... That was...

ISMENE: Agreed, I've never seen our priestess in such a state. *[looks and finds a spot to sit]* You'll excuse me if I sit in your presence, my knees aren't used to all this running.

[ZEUS nods and gestures at a bench. ISMENE sits down and smooths her dress.]

ISMENE: Can't have bothered you much, you've been in tougher scrapes before. Titans, giants?

ZEUS: I have, as you know well. Even with beings far beyond your reckoning, Chaos, who was there before all things and still fills the gaps between worlds... Yet I've come to realise, it is not that which has been worrying me.

ISMENE: I hear you. Has something been on your mind?

ZEUS: Yes, it has. Ah but no, that is not why I came here. To you. When we first spoke, you shared some of *your* mortal woes. Regrettably, I was... indisposed.

ISMENE: You looked like you needed rest.

ZEUS: Well, perhaps. However, now, I will hear your wishes.

ISMENE: I have lived in this place for many years. Not so long have I known Chaos, but it was still many decades. We used to honor the gods more, but with reason. *[pensive]* I used to honor the gods more. Now our prayers are like letters blown off the back of the postman's cart. Left unread.

ZEUS *[loudly and suddenly]*: Well we've been very busy!

[ZEUS quickly calms down and collects himself.]

ZEUS: Sorry, old habit. The titans are locked away, the giants defeated. What more would you have me—*[begrudgingly including the others]* the gods do?

ISMENE *[smiling]*: Fewer storms would be a good start. *[seriously]* The wilderness has less wildlife, people drink to forget, not to make memories, there is less music, less... love.

ZEUS *[startled]*: Lov- Look. I can get Apollo to inspire some music, and the weather might be subject to change, but love? That is a weakness I— *the world* cannot indulge in again.

ISMENE: I don't have my scarf handy, I left it in the temple, so you'll have to do without a heavy-handed metaphor. Please, would you come sit with me and tell me what happened to you?

[ZEUS sits down next to ISMENE. Silent. Eventually, he breaks the silence.]

ZEUS: Eons ago I saw a man in Troy, a shepherd. A half-god, the son of a river god's daughter, and absolutely stunning. We went out for a time, and I was in... *[choking on his words]* love.

[ZEUS stares off in the distance for a while.]

ZEUS: He drew all my attention when nothing else did. As I said before, I got complacent... I knew the other gods were envious, so I kept him far away from Olympus. Only when Hermes found us did I learn the giants had invaded. I defeated them, of course, but when I got back... he had gone.

ISMENE: He left you?

ZEUS: I do not know why he did, but soon after, he... *[with difficulty]* died fighting a giant.

ISMENE: Perhaps he tried to emulate you?

ZEUS: Does it matter? I got distracted, entangled, risked the world, and lost the love I had risked it for. I would not wish that on anyone.

ISMENE: We humans have to deal with loss whether we like it or not, even if we keep to our duties. Perhaps that is why we so appreciate the moments of joy in between. But it sounds like you still have questions.

ZEUS *[realising something]*: I need to go. Thank you, Ismene. You possess great wisdom and a caring heart.

[ZEUS gets up and starts walking away]

ZEUS: Oh! Do not think I forgot the things you have mentioned. They are not all in my domain, but I am the head of the gods after all. I... will do what I can.

Scene 16. Longing

*[In his palace in the underworld, **HADES** sits on his throne. Next to him, a second throne sits empty, covered in flowers and travel cards from all over. **ZEUS** walks on stage and to his brother.]*

ZEUS: It is time.

HADES: Finally. I've been trying to tell you.

ZEUS: I know, I know. I'm here now. I'm ready. Where can I find him?

HADES: In the fields, usually surrounded by a group of admirers. Hard to miss.

*[**ZEUS** turns to leave, but **HADES** gets up and walks over.]*

HADES: Before you talk to him, will you heed my advice?

*[**ZEUS** stops, motionless, looking away from his brother.]*

HADES: This is a place for goodbyes, not for endless longing. The departed deserve so as much as the living do. Go say goodbye, brother, and take your time, but when you're done? Move on. Head straight out... and don't look back.

*[**ZEUS** heads off, and **HADES** sits back down. **HADES** addresses the audience.]*

HADES: Even with all his wrongdoings and injustice, I stand behind my brother. In this perilous journey pushing the boulder of salvation up the endless daunting mountain of closure, he must go alone. For in life, just as in death, we must all eventually go alone. Afraid. Vulnerable... Content. Rest easy, Ganymede. You gave me back my brother. I hope that you can give him back his heart.

*[**PERSEPHONE** enters the stage. She goes behind **HADES**, caressing his shoulder.]*

PERSEPHONE: Was that Zeus I heard, my love? Where has he gone? He

should visit the underworld more often.

HADES [*holding her hand*]: No, love. I don't think he should.

Scene 17. Storm and Thunder

[APHRODITE, APOLLO, and ARTEMIS are sitting at a table in contemplation. DIONYSUS walks in.]

ARTEMIS: There is always one late for the meeting.

DIONYSUS: Sorry, sorry! No excuse this time. Got caught up.

ARTEMIS *[in sarcastic disbelief]*: In what?

DIONYSUS: ...scotch?

[APHRODITE puts her head on the table in despair. HADES walks in.]

DIONYSUS: Hey, big guy! *[turning towards ARTEMIS]* technically not the most late now, am I?

[ARTEMIS sticks out her tongue at him.]

HADES: Greetings...

APOLLO: I know you're the god of death, but you're still getting written tardy. You too, Dionysus! You know what? I have had quite enough. Let us begin, this is torturous.

APHRODITE: What do we do now?

DIONYSUS: Uh, hello! I will speak first. I am *[slamming fist on the table]* done with Zeus. We tried everything. I *embarrassed* myself for him. I *lied* for him. I *lusted* over him. Alright, that was actually my fault. *Point is*, I am done. His old lady friend slapped the good heavens out of me. Sobered me right up. All this started because of your ridiculously stupid intervention, Apollo!

APOLLO: Don't you dare blame this on me. Remember who switched up the bottles of love wine? One of your more humiliating stunts. I was afflicted with second-hand embarrassment from your disaster.

APHRODITE: Please, everyone! We cannot let this tear us apart. Remember why we did this in the first place?

ARTEMIS: *You* sure got off scot-free. This wouldn't have been such a rush job if you hadn't taken your sweet-ass time mixing that potion with the wine.

DIONYSUS: Don't you *dare* speak to her like that.

ARTEMIS: Whatcha gonna do? Spray me with booze spit?

APHRODITE: Artemis! Calm down!

APOLLO: Shut up for once, Aphrodite!

[The actors ad-lib arguments while talking over each other. ZEUS walks in. The room falls silent.]

DIONYSUS: You.

ZEUS: Salutations, gods. I have had time to think. To consider our failures.

APHRODITE *[snapping]*: **Our** failures?!

[The gods circle around ZEUS, finally brought to a breaking point. They make angry gestures at him, even ones suggesting violence.]

ZEUS: Aphrodite, wait!

APHRODITE: No, I am **fucking** done!

[More clamor. Insults. Gestures. ZEUS brings an end to it.]

ZEUS *[shouting]*: **I'M SORRY!**

[The room falls silent. The gods look at him in disbelief, as if they are dreaming. Receiving no verbal reaction, he keeps talking.]

ZEUS *[still speaking loudly, confessing, almost without interruption]*: Love! I did it out of love! Love for you, for Ganymede, afraid to lose you all the way I lost *him*! I felt **NOTHING** without him, I could **NOT** let you end up the way he did, lying in bloodied dirt infested with worms, all because of **ME**.

[ZEUS looks around, almost in tears.]

ZEUS: I hope you all can forgive me, for I never meant to do you harm. I was blinded by hate. Grief. I thought that if I buried my care deep in my heart, I

would not have to bury you too. I thought I needed to be strong, with iron resolve, holding up the whole mountain on my shoulders in search of safety. I mistreated you all—Artemis, Apollo, Dionysus... Aphrodite... I treated you worst of all.

APHRODITE *[breaking her silence]*: But why?

ZEUS: Because your craft reminds me of the love I felt for Ganymede. Of the loss of Ganymede. I considered you guilty for tearing others the way I was torn from him, but in fact, I tore myself from him. Then, I tore myself from you. I do not expect your forgiveness, but I must ask this of you: in the name of faith—work with me. Work with me to undo my wrath that scars the mortal lands. Apollo, they need more music. Artemis, I heard of quite an enthusiastic sister looking for you. Dionysus... Calista's wine was impeccable. Aphrodite... People deserve to love. They do.

APHRODITE: You do too, Zeus. I cannot speak for the others, not after our fight, but... I will stand by your side. I will do what I can.

DIONYSUS: Me too, I suppose.

ARTEMIS: You owe me a herd of ass... But sure.

[APOLLO remains silent. Everyone looks at him expectantly. He looks around nervously. Suddenly, he breaks down in tears.]

APOLLO *[hugging ZEUS]*: Oh, Zeus! I knew you would come around! Of course! Of course! *I will sing the most glorious hymns in your honor!*

ARTEMIS *[peeling APOLLO off of ZEUS]*: Alright, Apollo, I think he got your point.

[APHRODITE chuckles. HADES steps forward. He stops in front of ZEUS, who looks at him expectantly and anxiously. HADES puts a hand on his shoulder.]

HADES: I am glad you came to your senses, brother. I know he would be proud of you.

ZEUS: Thank you, brother.

HADES *[chuckling]*: You better get to work. Before you harden up again.

ARTEMIS: Yes to the Zeus train! That said, I need to tell you something.

ZEUS: What is it, Artemis?

ARTEMIS: ...*you might need a new high priestess.* She takes after her sister.

ZEUS *[shouting]:* ...***What?***

[The lights go out. Everyone leaves the stage. Applause is to be expected at this point; let it die down before the epilogue.]

Scene 18. Epilogue

*[In the mortal realm, the **PRIESTESS** and her **SISTER** are sitting, laughing and conversing. **ISMENE** is in the center of the stage, knitting a scarf. **MORTAL 1** enters the stage and goes to her. **KOSMOS** can barely be seen observing the events halfway offstage.]*

MORTAL 1: Won't have much need of that, you know? *[looking up at the sky]* The weather is nice for once. Temperate. Hah, couldn't have imagined.

ISMENE: Oh, this is just a little something for myself. I started knitting this for my mother before she passed away. My father wouldn't let me finish it, for he was bitter at the gods, just like you were. *[laughing]* I believe the entire temple was; I can't blame them.

MORTAL 1: You think you'll finish it in time for winter?

ISMENE: Oh no, I have undone it dozens of times at this point. It's good for me. I just keep knitting... If I finish it, I'll just lose my purpose.

MORTAL 1: So you just keep destroying it, over and over again?

ISMENE: I wouldn't say I'm *destroying* it...

MORTAL 1: Right, then what would you call it?

ISMENE: I don't know. I believe... *[looking towards the audience]* I believe I'm rewriting it.

[Cut to black.]