

IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME!

A MYTHOLOGICAL COMEDY MUSICAL

BY BEN KYBETT

(A.K.A. RAMBLING)

FOR TOM & JUDITH

(A.K.A. NONSENSE & THE GRAND JUGOGLY)

OULES

Oxford University Light Entertainment Society

Contents

Dramatis Personae (even though that's Latin)

Songs

Act The First

Scene 1 - Prologue

Scene 2 - The Olympics

Scene 3 - Ariadne!

Scene 4 - In the W(h)ine Bar

Scene 5 - Silenus

Scene 6 - Oh I Don't Like to Be Beside the Seaside!

Scene 7 - Hades crashes the party

Scene 8 - An Oracle and an Existential Crisis

Scene 9 - Ariadne v. Feather-Pony v. Hercules

Scene 10 - A QUEST!

Scene 11 - This is Sparta

Scene 12 - Ithaca

Scene 13 - Meanwhile, in the Underworld...

Scene 14 - The Challenge

Act the Second

Scene 1 - Delphi ex machina

Scene 2 - Helen and Penelope: Dream Team

Scene 3 - Hades sets a trap

Scene 4 - In which Perseus has a highly cunning plan...

Scene 5 - Hercules tries it on

Scene 6 - Olympic Coverage

Scene 7 - ALL the Melodrama

Scene 8 - A Choral Interlude

Scene 9 - Clash of the Titans

Scene 10 - A Happy Ending?

Scene Listing by Character

Dramatis Personae (even though that's Latin)

THE HEROINES

ARIADNE - THE PROTAGONIST OF THE PIECE. A GREEK PRINCESS WHO'S DONE WITH ALL THE WEAVING.

HELEN - FORMERLY OF TROY. A WOMAN LOOKING FOR SOME AGENCY.

PENELOPE - WIFE OF ODYSSEUS, QUEEN OF ITHACA. WHICH, INCIDENTALLY, SHE'S PRETTY GOOD AT.

THE HEROES

HERCULES - SON OF ZEUS, ALL AROUND NIGH INVINCIBLE ACTION HERO. RECENTLY REBRANDED.

JASON - CAPTAIN OF THE ARGO, RESCUER OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE.

THESEUS - SLAYER OF MINOTAUR. ARIADNE'S FORMER BOYFRIEND.

PERSEUS - SLAYER OF THE MEDUSA. DOES A GOOD LINE IN STATUARY.

ODYSSEUS - HE MAY BE FULL OF TRICKS, BUT WILL HE ASK FOR DIRECTIONS?

ASSORTED DEITIES

ZEUS - KING OF THE GODS, BEARER OF LIGHTNING.

ATHENA - GODDESS OF WAR AND WISDOM.

DIONYSUS - GOD OF WINE, OWNER OF WINE BAR

HADES - LORD OF THE UNDERWORLD. THE BIG BAD.

PERSEPHONE - GODDESS OF SPRINGTIME AND FLOWERS. QUEEN OF THE UNDERWORLD. DEEPLY BADASS.

CHARON - HADES' RIGHT-HAND DEITY.

ODYSSEUS' CREW

TIMON - A.K.A. TIM, ODYSSEUS' FIRST MATE.

ALCIBIADES - A.K.A. AL, ONE OF THE CREW

PERICLES - A.K.A. PERRY, THE CABIN BOY

THE CHORUS (A SLIGHTLY META DOUBLE ACT)

CASSANDRA - THE SERIOUS ONE

PHOEBE - THE CHEERFUL ONE

THE SPARTANS

LEONIDAS - KING OF SPARTA. HAS KILLER ABS AND A MYSTERIOUS SCOTTISH ACCENT.

STELIOS - LEONIDAS' RIGHT HAND MAN

MINDAROS - A SPARTAN

PENELOPE'S SUITORS

ANTINOUS

CTESSIPUS

ELATUS

THE OTHERS

SILENUS - A SATYR. NOT AT ALL BASED ON A SMALL GREEN STAR WARS CHARACTER. WOULD I DO THAT?

MELANTHO - A.K.A. MELLY, HANDMAIDEN OF PENELOPE, PRIME MINISTER OF ITHACA

CLODIUS - HERCULES' PUBLICIST

DELPHINE - THE ORACLE OF DELPHI

SONGS

ACT 1

1.3 - A LITTLE BIT OF ADVENTURE (ARIADNE, ATHENA)

A FOLKY, SLIGHTLY WISTFUL NUMBER. NEEDS TO BEAR A FAIR AMOUNT OF THE WEIGHT FOR ARIADNE'S CHARACTERISATION, PARTICULARLY HER LONGING TO DO SOMETHING WITH HER LIFE

1.4- BACK WHEN WE WERE HEROES (PERSEUS, JASON, THESEUS, DIONYSUS)

NEEDS LITTLE EXPLANATION - HEROES CONTRASTING THEIR PAST GLORIES WITH THEIR PRESENT BOREDOM

1.12 - THE SUITORS SONG (ANTINOUS, ELATUS, CTESIPPUS, PENELOPE)

A PROPER, HIGH ENERGY COMEDY NUMBER.

1.13 - HADES' VILLAIN SONG (HADES, PERSEPHONE, CHARON)

A GOOD OLD FASHIONED JAZZY VILLAIN SONG

ACT 2

2.5 - LOVE'S NOT IN THE AIR TONIGHT (ARIADNE, HERCULES)

PARODY OF A DISNEY LOVE DUET, IN WHICH HERCULES ATTEMPTS TO SEDUCE ARIADNE, AND SHE GIVES HIM FAIRLY SHORT SHRIFT

2.10 - FINAL SONG

WHICH GOES AT THE END

Act The First

Scene 1 - Prologue

Enter CASSANDRA & PHOEBE, wearing those weird theatre masks they used to wear in Greek drama.

Cassandra *(Muffled by her mask)* Oh come to us, O Muses nine! Bear us on thy gilded wings far back to a time of heroes and of legends.

Phoebe *(Also muffled)* What?

Cassandra *(Still muffled)* What?

Phoebe *(See above)* I can't hear what you're saying, you need to take your mask off.

Cassandra *(Etc.)* What?

Phoebe *(And so on)* I said... Oh for goodness sake. *(She removes her mask)* I said, that I can't hear what you're saying, you need to take your mask off.

Cassandra *(Also taking her mask off)* But we need to keep them on. They're supposed to convey our emotions.

Phoebe Can't we just use our faces? You know... acting?

Cassandra Oh, fine. Alright then, we'll start again. *(Striking dramatic pose)* Oh come to us, O Muses nine! Bear us far back on thy gilded wings to a time of heroes and of legends...

Phoebe Is that really necessary?

Cassandra Is what necessary?

Phoebe All the melodrama.

Cassandra We're telling an epic tale, aren't we?

Phoebe Epic-ish. It has it's moments. Mostly it's just a bit silly.

Cassandra Well, how would you start?

Phoebe Oh, I don't know. How about this... Good evening, one and all, and welcome to 'It's All Greek to Me'! I'm Phoebe, and this is Cassandra,

and we are your choruses for the evening. *(To Cassandra)* Is that right - choruses? I feel that maybe it ought to be chori...

Cassandra It's a collective term. We are both collectively, the chorus. I also don't see why the audience need to know our names. We're the ones doing the talking.

Phoebe Not necessarily.

Cassandra *(Horried)* Are you suggesting that there might be some audience interaction?

Phoebe Could be... they might even heckle some of the actors.

Cassandra Oh no they wouldn't...

Phoebe Oh yes they would!

I think you can see where this is going. After whatever follow...

Cassandra This isn't going quite as I'd hoped...

Phoebe It's going fine. Why don't we just introduce the plot, and leave it at that.

Cassandra Fine, fine. We have for you tonight a tale of gods and heroes, monsters and villains.

Phoebe Also wine. Wine is a fairly major motif.

Cassandra There will be battles and duels.

Phoebe And puns and some pretty awful jokes...

Cassandra It's the untold story of how Princess Ariadne saved the gods of Olympus from a terrible fate.

Phoebe And how some blokes with dodgy accents almost ruin the entire thing.

Cassandra We are therefore proud to present...

Cassandra It's all Greek to me!
& Phoebe

Scene 2 – The Olympics

Lights up on the courts of Olympus, a heavenly paradise of stupendous majesty, full of wonders and... look we don't really have the budget for this, do we? OK, let's say ZEUS has some kind of throne thing, which he's sitting on... oh come on, at least a throne. Anyway, enter ATHENA

Athena Hail, Lord Zeus!

Zeus Oh, hello Athena, dear. Can we have the full title please? Protocol and all that....

Athena *(Sighing)* Really, dad?

Zeus Yes please, young lady

Athena We're gods, Dad. We're immortal, ageless, unchanging.

Zeus *(Sternly)* And that doesn't mean you can take this attitude with me. I didn't give birth to you out of my head so I could take a whole lot of backchat.

Athena Fine! Hail Zeus, king of the gods, master of Olympus, lord of the skies, maker of lightning and father of mankind!

Zeus And...

Athena Really?

Zeus Yes....

Athena And voted most desirable deity by Theban Cosmo three years running.

Zeus Gotta love those Theban ladies... Anyway, what is it you would ask of me?

Athena Well, I've been thinking about all the mythological stories we have had lately – Jason and the Argonauts, Perseus and Medusa, Theseus and the Minotaur, the Trojan war and all that...

Zeus Ah, yes, some real humdingers in there. Lot's of excitement, adventure, a few romantic subplots. Terrific.

Athena Yes, Lord Zeus, but there's one thing they all lack....

Zeus Really? Can't think of anything....

Athena Women, Lord Zeus! Absolutely no female heroes anywhere to be seen...

Zeus Now that's just not true!

Athena Oh really? Name one!

Zeus Oh well... ummm... Helen of Troy?

Athena Oh come on...

Zeus Well, she is a major character... The face that launched a thousand ships, and all that...

Athena She sits around in a tower for the entire Trojan War. And she's totally defined by her looks!

Zeus Okay, okay, not her. What about... Penelope?

Athena Who?

Zeus Wife of Odysseus, mother of Telemachus, the heir to Ithaca

Athena Exactly! Defined by her men.

Zeus Look, I'm not sure I see your point?

Athena (*Staying reasonable by an effort of will*) I was just wondering whether, just maybe, the next mythological adventure might have a woman lead....?

Zeus Alright, fine, fine. We're going to need an adventure for her though. Now let's see... how about finding the best value for money on sandals in the market-places of Lydia? Weaving a shawl thick enough to warm her in the courts of Boreas?

Athena Oh no you don't. You're not fobbing me off with some half-baked 'girly' adventure. We're having a proper heroic quest, with terrifying villains and death-defying exploits. Something really worthy of legend.

Zeus Oh, so that's how you want it, is it? Fine. If you truly want your chosen woman to enter the mythological canon, then she must outdo the exploits of our greatest hero, Hercules.

Athena Not that poser...

Zeus Poser my son may be, but he accomplished 12 nigh-impossible labours. So this is my challenge to you. I'll set your chosen woman a task like that, and we'll see how she does.

Athena Oh, go on then. It'll do.

Zeus Splendid. Now, I hope you can find a girl up to the job.

Athena Oh, don't worry about that. I know just the one...

Exeunt



Scene 3 – Ariadne!

Enter PHOEBE & CASSANDRA

Cassandra The golden chariot of Phoebus Apollo, lord of the incandescent sun, sinks into the baths of the western seas. Behold now, as we fly on the gilded wings of the gods themselves to the far, fair isle of Naxos, wherein our great heroine grows weary of her languor!

Phoebe Seriously?

Cassandra What is it now?

Phoebe If you keep on like that, we're going to be here all night. It's evening, the next scene's set on an island, Ariadne's a bit bored.

Cassandra You do realise the job of the chorus is to set the mood for the audience, don't you.

Phoebe You're not setting the mood, you're boring them to tears. And it's only the third scene. Look, guys, here's the lowdown on Ariadne: she was princess of Crete, daughter of Minos. Then Theseus turns up, she helps him kill the minotaur. They get engaged, he gets cold feet and dumps her on the island of Naxos.

Cassandra Oh for Zeus' sake, can we at least work out how we're going to do our chorusing before we come stage? This is embarrassing.

Phoebe Fine, let's go and sort that out backstage.

Exit PHOEBE & CASSANDRA. Enter ARIADNE. Perhaps she's got a Pina Colada in one hand (AUTHORIAL NOTE: is this what people drink on beaches? I really wouldn't know. Also, she's definitely alone on a deserted island, but don't bother asking where she's getting the cocktails from. It's for artistic effect.)

Song! – *'A Little Bit of Adventure'*

In which Ariadne bemoans her circumstances, gives us a little bit of backstory, and tells of us her desire for adventure. And gives us a catchy chorus.

As the song draws to a close, enter ATHENA

Athena Hail Ariadne!

Ariadne Who the Hades are you!?

Athena I am Athena, goddess of war and wisdom, and I bring unto you glad tidings!

Ariadne What?

Athena Glad tidings... sort of, good news.

Ariadne Yeah, I know what I means, I just want to know who talks like that.

Athena Sorry, I know it's a bit silly. It's Zeus, he insists on a certain gravitas when we're addressing mortals. He issued a style guide, actually.

Ariadne Sounds like a bit of a bore.

Athena You have no idea. You know I'm not allowed to use the word 'ship'. I'm supposed to call them 'stallions of the wine-dark sea'. He's got a little bit too into epic poetry recently. Gone all kinds of Homeric.

Ariadne So what is this good news? The goddess of wisdom and war doesn't just drop in for a chat.

Athena Zeus has decreed that the Greeks shall, at last, have a female hero. And I have chosen you, Ariadne of Crete, to be my champion.

Ariadne Sweet.

Athena Sweet? I thought I might get more of a reaction than that. What about quaking in terror at the dangers you'll have to face.

Ariadne Well frankly, I'm up for anything that gets me off this island. I've spent most of the last couple of years on this beach, drinking Pina Colodas. Would you like one, by the way?

Athena No thanks, I drink only the Nectar of Olympus.

Ariadne Suit yourself. But why me? I take it you didn't choose me for my cocktail making abilities.

Athena I chose you, Ariadne, because I see great things in you. It was your intelligence and bravery that killed that minotaur on Crete. Theseus just swung the sword.

Ariadne Well, if you say so. But what do I have to do?

Athena Zeus will set you a great task. Complete it without dying a horrible death, and you will become a legend.

Song - Brief reprise of 'A Little Bit of Adventure'

Sung by Athena, with the chorus as a duet

Athena Come now Ariadne. We must travel to a far off land, so that you may be trained in the powers of heroing...

Ariadne Ah, that might be a bit of a problem. I'm a little stuck on this island. I haven't got a stallion of the wine-dark sea. Or even a boat.

Athena I shall use my mystical goddess powers to transport you there.

Ariadne That's handy. Shall we get going then?

Exeunt

Scene 4 - In the W(h)ine Bar

Lights up on Dionysus' Wine Bar. It really would be useful to have a sign at least to indicate this. DIONYSUS, god of wine himself, is behind the 'bar', or nearest approximation thereof, polishing his wine glasses). Three people are drinking, looking rather morose. They are: THESEUS (who is slightly asleep), PERSEUS, and JASON

Perseus Pass the bottle, will you, Jason?

JASON passes him the bottle. PERSEUS tries to pour out some, but finds it to be empty. He confirms this by staring into it rather mournfully.

Perseus We're out of booze.

Jason Get another one then.

Perseus It's Theseus' round.

Theseus Hmm? Whadya say?

Jason It's your round Theseus.

Theseus What? No it isn't. I got the last one... or maybe the one before last. It's Perseus' round.

Perseus Is not.

Theseus Is so.

With this, he once more becomes comatose.

Perseus Oh fine. (*Shouting*) Hey, Dionysus! Another bottle!

Dionysus Don't you think you've had enough.

Jason No we don't. You're the god of wine aren't you? So send us over another bottle.

Dionysus Also the god of revelry. I've seen livelier atmospheres than this at Hades' Underworld parties. Can't you be a bit more upbeat? Stop whining for goodness sake. Whining... get it.

Jason What?

Dionysus Whine... wine... anyone?

Perseus Are you the god of awful puns as well? Now I'm even more depressed.

Dionysus Oh come on! You're Greece's mightiest heroes for Zeus' sake. What have you got to be down about?

Jason Well, we've done all our heroing, haven't we? I got the golden fleece, and Theseus slew the minotaur, and Perseus here killed Medusa. And now what?

Dionysus Well, you get the spoils of victory, don't you.

Perseus The only spoils of victory I got was using Medusa's head to set up a statuary business. Churning out little stone bunny rabbits and squirrels to go in Mrs. Leonidas' of Sparta's garden.

Dionysus Well, what about your happy endings? You got the girls, after all

Jason Well... I suppose so. But... well... take Theseus. He couldn't stand Ariadne, and left her on Naxos.

Dionysus Blimey, that seems a bit harsh.

Theseus *(Starting from slumber)* I regret nothing!

Perseus I wish I'd done that. I married Andromeda, and you know what I get... blissful domesticity, that's what. It's just so... boring.

Song - Back When We Were Agents Legends Heroes.

Dionysus Well, nothing like a good sing-song to cheer everyone up, eh?

The Heroes *(Still downbeat)* Yeah...

Enter HERCULES, in spectacular fashion. He's a spectacular kind of guy...

Hercules 'Sup losers?

Dionysus Heracles? What are you doing here?

Hercules Di, Di, Di... It's not Heracles anymore, y'know. They call me Hercules now...

Dionysus Who do?

Hercules Oh, people generally... chicks mainly.

Perseus What's all this 'Hercules' crap?

Hercules It's not crap, dude. It's called 'rebranding'. Shaking everything up, making it fresh and exciting. I'm going big in Rome. Rome's where it's happening these days. It's up and coming, you know.

Perseus snorts

Hercules Gezundheit...

Perseus Rome. That poxy town in... Italy?

Hercules That's the place. Great food, gorgeous girls, a bit of sun. What's not to like? So I had my name translated into Latin, so that all those Roman guys and gals could join Team Me!

Theseus Team You?

Hercules Team Me! That's what heroing's all about these days, guys. Getting your image across. Pushing the brand. You don't want to get stuck in the Bronze Age, do you? I've just released my autobiography -

Can we please make this so that this can happen. HERCULES holds up a copy of a book next to his face, which breaks into a cheesy grin...

Hercules 'Hercules: Zero to Hero'. Coming soon to all good bookstores...

Perseus Kill me. Just kill me now.

Hercules So, I just thought I'd pop in to give you the chance to buy a copy.

Jason Buy a copy? Right now?

Hercules Sure. Don't all thank me at once.

Dionysus They can't afford to buy a copy, Herc. They all owe me their last drachma for booze.

Theseus I thought you said they were on the house.

Dionysus That was one round, Theseus. Three years ago.

Theseus What?!

Dionysus Oh for Zeus' sake...

Hercules Well, if you're not interested, give it to your girlfriend. Give her a

chance to see what a real hero looks like... Here. You can owe me for it. *(He chucks the book to Perseus)*

Perseus Oh, go shove your head up a harpy's ar....

Hercules Love you too Perse. See you dudes

Exit HERCULES

Theseus That guy is the worst. The actual worst.

Jason You're telling me.

Dionysus If I had my way, I'd turn him into a vine right here and now.

Perseus Say, Dionysus, chuck as another bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon.

Dionysus You got any money for it?

Perseus ... Nope.

Dionysus *(Slightly resignedly)* Fine, whatever.

Lights down

Scene 5 – Silenus

Lights up on ATHENA and ARIADNE. ATHENA is centre stage, looking authoritative, while ARIADNE lurks over her shoulder, slightly dazed.

Ariadne So... where are we, exactly?

Athena The mountains of Cappadocia, the very edge of the lands of the Greeks.

Ariadne Oh right... isn't that, you know, quite a long way away from Naxos. You know, where we were... 5 seconds ago?

Athena Of course. I don't like to bang on about it, but I am a goddess, after all.

Ariadne Oh, so we teleported?

Athena Not exactly. It's a bit more complicated than that. I subsumed you in the radiance of my divine essence and warped the fabric of reality to bring us here instantaneously.

Ariadne Sounds quite like teleportation to me...

Athena You mortals can be so unappreciative. You just don't get the nuances involved in these things. I mean...

Ariadne Shush, I think someone's coming.

Athena Oh good, it's him.

Ariadne Him?

Enter SILENUS

Silenus Ah, Athena it is. Come to find me she has. And not alone is she.

Athena No not alone, Silenus. I require your help, my friend.

Silenus Help? Strange for help to be asking from one as old as I.

Athena I know you swore you'd trained your last hero, after Hercules.

Silenus Of him speak not. My last hope, he was.

Athena And he's a great hero....

Silenus Pah! Great hero indeed. Book signings and front-page stories a hero

do not make.

Athena So, train someone better. Someone to be the hero you wish Hercules could have been. Ariadne, here.

Silenus Hmm... *(He goes over to Ariadne)* Straight, stand up. Slouch, a hero does not.

ARIADNE straightens up

Athena Will you do it, Silenus?

Silenus Done, it cannot be. A hero, she will never be. The spirit, she does not have.

Ariadne That's a bit harsh, we've only just met...

Athena Look deep within, Silenus. The spirit is there.

From somewhere on ARIADNE'S person SILENUS extracts a bottle of vodka.

Silenus Right, maybe you were.

Athena I thought you said it was Pina Coladas...

Ariadne What? Sometimes I fancied something a bit stronger.

Athena Well, apart from the minor alcohol problem, she has great potential.

Silenus No. Do it, I will not. Peace, leave me in, Athena.

He goes to leave

Ariadne Silenus!

He continues leaving

Athena Silenus, you old goat, get back here.

Silenus turns

Silenus Call me, what did you just?

Athena I called you an old goat.

Silenus Highly offensive to satyrs, this is, as well you know Athena.

Athena Well, you're being as stubborn as one. Ariadne can be the greatest

hero Greece has ever seen. I swear this unto you by all the gods of Olympus.

Ariadne I can, Silenus. Just let me prove it to you...

SILENUS hesitates for a moment.

Silenus Very well. Train you I will. But no promises of success I make.

Athena That's all we ask.

Silenus A training montage, we will require....

Right, we're going to try something a bit different here. It's going to require some really top notch incidental music (perhaps a variation on 'A Little Bit of Adventure'), something inspiring in the 'I'll Make a Man Out Of You' mould. During this, ARIADNE and SILENUS will mime, hopefully to hilarious effect, various bits of the 'training', while ATHENA reacts appropriately to the successes and failures. Save the recriminations for the cast-party...

Scene 6 - Oh I Don't Like to Be Beside the Seaside!

Light's up on Odysseus. He's on a boat, but I can't think of anyway to communicate this visually - at least none that won't eat our budget for about the next fifty years. Over to you directors!

Odysseus Captain Odysseus' log, dawn, 18th July 874 B.C. We spent ten years fighting the war at Troy, and have now spent a further ten years at sea. I make that twenty years since we left Ithaca... Wait, let me check my maths on that... yes, yes, twenty it is. Still no sight of home.

Tim *(O/S)* Land-ho!

Odysseus First Mate Timon has just sighted land. We will go ashore and make camp. With any luck, this island will hopefully not be infested with horrible monsters. 132nd time lucky...

Enter TIM

Tim We've spotted land off our starboard bow, captain.

Odysseus Thanks Tim. Assemble the crew and conduct a roll-call before we go ashore.

Tim Certainly, captain. *(Shouting in the general direction of off-stage)* Crew, roll-call!

Enter AL & PERRY at high speed, who 'line-up' at attention

Tim The crew is assembled, captain. Permission to conduct roll-call.

Odysseus Carry on.

Tim Crewman Alcibiades

Al Present, sir.

Tim Cabin-boy Pericles

Perry Present, sir.

Tim First-mate Timon?... Oh that's me. Present! Roll-call complete, captain, all crew accounted for.

Odysseus What, all of them?

Tim Yes, sir, all apart from the ship's cat. But we can never get him to stand still long enough for roll-call.

Odysseus Tim... I could swear we had more crew than this.

Tim Well, sir, 12 of them got turned into pigs by the sorceress Circe, 8 got crushed by the Cyclops, 3 got eaten by the Laestrygonians

Odysseus Oh I remember that, that was nasty, that was.

Tim Quite, sir. Then another 14 decided to stay on the island of the Lotus eaters... I think that's all of them. Am I missing anyone?

Al Crewman Alexander. We never saw him again after that massive party we had when landed on Crete.

Perry And the ship's cook, sir. He deserted last week.

Odysseus Why?

Perry Well, sir, he had this massive rant. The gist of it was the he was bored of sailing round and round in circles, that we were never going to get home, and he was going to get off this ship while it was still afloat...

Tim Thanks, Al, thanks Perry. Also Crewman Alexander and the ship's cook, sir.

Odysseus So, we started out with, what, 45 crew, and now we're down to... 3?

Tim That's about the size of it, sir, yes.

Odysseus That's not good.

Perry To lose 1 crew member may be regarded as a misfortune, to lose 42 looks like carelessness.

Odysseus How can this have happened to me? I'm Odysseus, full of tricks, hero of Troy, the cleverest of all the Greeks.

Tim Well, sir, I think it's because we keep getting lost. It's taken us ten years now and we're still not home. And it really shouldn't take us that long to go from the coast of western Turkey to an island just off of Greece.

Odysseus Well, I'm sorry, but I've been using the most state of the art navigation system yet invented by Bronze age science. You see, what you do is, you take the position of the north star, and you multiply

the angle in radians that it makes with Mount Olympus.

Perry Yes sir, but...

Odysseus Shush, Perry, I'm not finished yet... Then you divide that by the factorial of the size of your sail in square cubits plus the number of oars that your ship has times the number of chickens within a 5 mile radius, and that gives your heading.

Tim And that's all well and good, sir, but me and the lads have been thinking...

Odysseus You've been thinking...? *You* lot. But you're idiots. Al here can't even read.

Perry Though in fairness, sir, that's because of the socio-economic circumstances of the archaic world, with it's as yet unadvanced literacy rates, rather than a reflection on his intelligence in absolute terms.

Al Though I am still a bit of an idiot...

Perry Yes, but only because you are enslaved by the non-intellectual role forced on you by the aristocratic elites of our society, which prevents you from standing up for - nay, demanding - your full civic rights as a member of a city-state.

Odysseus Socio-economic circumstances? Full civic rights?

Perry I've been taking a correspondence course with University of Athens between my chores, sir. Sociology and political theory.

Odysseus But you're just the cabin boy. You're far too young to be doing degrees.

Perry I was too young, sir, when we left home. I'm 34 now.

Tim And that brings us back to the point, sir. Me and the lads think we've come up with a way for us to get home. Rather than using all that bollocks about chickens...

Odysseus Highly advanced navigation techniques...

Tim Yes sir, that, we were wondering whether we might not... just... stop and ask directions.

Odysseus Hmm... interesting idea. Very interesting. To be honest, it hadn't

occurred to me at all.

Perry We didn't think it had, sir.

Odysseus Very well, we'll give it a try. We'll ask whoever lives at our next landing place for some directions. Have you got the ship's telescope, Al? Be a good chap and have a look at what you can see, then.

AL peers through a telescope.

Al I can see a beach, sir. There's a piece of wood with some funny squiggles on it.

Perry That'd be writing, Al. It must be a welcome sign. Let me have a look.

He grabs the telescope

Perry Oh...

Odysseus What is it? What does it say?

Perry It says (*gulp*) It says... 'THIS IS SPARTA'

Odysseus Oh...

Tim Bugger....

Blackout

Scene 7 - Hades crashes the party

Lights up on the wine bar. The protagonists are very much in the same state as we left them last.

Perseus Dionysus... we're out of wine again.

Dionysus Oh for Zeus' sake, not again. You're going to drink me dry, you know.

Jason You're the all-powerful god of wine, aren't you? You can just command it into existence then. The supply's basically unlimited.

Dionysus That's beside the point. I really ought to be heading to Olympus.

Perseus Can't you just leave us with the keys? We'll lock up and turn the lights out when we're done.

Theseus *(Stirring from his semi-recumbent pose)* More wine!

Dionysus Oh for goodness sake! Here you go. *(He passes Theseus a new bottle)*. I really don't like seeing you like this guys. I thought that song had cheered you up a bit. Maybe we could do another one?

Pianist Nope. You're only getting one.

Dionysus What, really? Not even a minor reprise?

Pianist We'll see. But definitely not before Act 2.

Jason You know there's only one thing that's going to cheer us up, and that's a proper quest.

Perseus A quest!

Theseus ... QUEST!

Dionysus But for you guys to get a quest, there'd have to be some sort of a crisis. A disaster. A villain...

Immediately enter HADES, PERSEPHONE, and CHARON. We need some sort of audio-visual drama as well - some dramatic chords, a lighting change, that kind of thing.

Hades Did someone ask for a villain?

Dionysus Hades?!

Hades That's right, Di. Hope you don't mind us crashing the party.

Dionysus Not... not at all. Can I get you a drink?

Hades Oh, we're not staying for long. Charon, grab him.

Charon Yes boss.

CHARON seizes DIONYSUS

Perseus Hey, what's going on?

Hades Persephone, Charon and I will be leaving shortly. And Di here will be going with us.

Jason We can't let you do take him!

Hades And what are you going to do about it?

Jason Well, we'll fight you. Won't we guys.

They mumble slightly

Jason Won't we?

Perseus Yeah, alright.

Persephone Oh please! Hop it, small timers. We're omnipotent deities.

Jason And we are three of Greece's mightiest heroes!

THESEUS slumps off his stool

Charon That one doesn't look particularly mighty...

Jason He is on a good day.

Persephone Do you really want to go up against three gods?

Suddenly, PERSEUS smirks slightly

Perseus Yeah, but you're like, Persephone, right, the goddess of springtime and flowers.

Persephone (*Dangerously*) Do you have a point?

Perseus No, it's just, I think we'd be OK.

Persephone You ever picked a fight with a season, bitch?

Perseus N-n-n-no ma'am....

Persephone Didn't think so.

Theseus I think Apollo has a club on the other side of town. Maybe we should just...

Dionysus Oh, thanks very much.

Jason Come on guys, we can take them...

Charon You want me to deal with them, boss?

Hades I think Persephone's got it covered, haven't you dear?

Persephone Sure.

Jason Let's gettem!

JASON charges, with THESEUS & PERSEUS advancing rather less enthusiastically. PERSEPHONE holds out a hand, and they all freeze, and are then thrown to the floor.

Hades Come, let us return to my realm of darkness!

HADES & CO exit to maniacal laughter

Perseus Bugger...

Pause

Theseus *(Still, in this case, entirely recumbent)* Someone pass the booze...

Lights out

Scene 8 – An Oracle and an Existential Crisis

Enter PHOEBE & CASSANDRA. I feel like that CASSANDRA should be wearing a back-to-front baseball cap. Whoever's playing her/directing may well disagree.

Cassandra Hey... guys. The next bit of this... totally dope... play... thing... is set in Delphi, innit? So, like, chill, or whatever... right?

Phoebe What, by Hades' infernal underwear, do you think you are doing?

Cassandra I'm making my chorusing more accessible, like you said.

Phoebe There is no conceivable universe in which I would have told you to do it like that.

Cassandra You did! You said I had to drop the classical idiom, and make it easier to understand.

Phoebe Yeah, easier to understand. Not like the ravings of a psychotically insecure youth group leader.

Cassandra I'm doing my best.

Phoebe Just get off stage!

Enter, from opposite sides of the stage, DELPHINE & HELEN

Delphine *(Deep, booming voice)* Welcome, weary traveller to Delphi. You have reached the end of your quest... and the beginning.

Helen How does that, like, work then?

Delphine Sort of both... it's a poetic thing. Don't interrupt! I am the Oracle of Phoebus Apollo! And you! You are Helen of Troy, lover of Paris...

Helen Yeah, sure, that's me.

Delphine You don't seem very impressed that I know that. Are you not astonished by my mystical powers of divination?

Helen Mystical powers? Honey, I had to put my name on the Prophetic Advice Application Form at reception.

Delphine Oh... never mind then.

Helen So, can I ask you my question then?

Delphine Yeah, alright, if you want.

Helen There's no need to get sulky, sweetie.

Delphine Sorry, fine. What would you ask of the gods?

Helen Well, I want to know, like, what I'm supposed to be doing.

Delphine Ummm... what do you mean?

Helen You know, my purpose in life.

Delphine In what sense?

Helen You're not much of an Oracle are you? I'm the one who's supposed to ask the questions.

Delphine Do you mind? Most people turn up and ask who's going to win next week's chariot race, or whether Cleon from the other side of the agora fancies them. They don't ask me to solve their existential crises.

Helen So, what, you're saying you're not up to it? Huh, I knew you were all hype.

Delphine *(Somewhat defensively)* No. I'm just saying it's a tricky one.

Helen Aren't you supposed to be, like, all-knowing?

Delphine Technically, I'm just the vessel of the prophetic spirit and... look, why don't you just tell me about it and I'll do my best.

Helen Whatever, honey. So, I'm Helen. Yeah, I know, face that launched a thousand ships. I'll give you my autograph later. I ran away from my husband with Paris. Next thing I know, a whole army of Greeks are at the gates of Troy, and there's this, like, enormous battle going on. All for little old me.

Delphine That must have been exciting.

Helen I mean, yeah, for, like, ten minutes. But after ten years, it gets a bit old. And then, well, Odysseus, wooden horse, yadda yadda yadda.

Delphine The razing of the city of the Troy, and the enslavement of all its people?

Helen That too, I suppose. Point is, I end up back at home. Doing nothing. And it's miserable.

Delphine But I don't get it. You're Helen. You're the most beautiful woman in the world. Not to mention, fabulously rich and famous, and loved by everyone. What have you got to be miserable about?

Helen It turns out that even being adored gets boring. I don't just want to, like, be. I want to, like, do. You see what I mean? So that's why I'm here.

Delphine Hmm... well, let's see what we can do. I just need a sniff of this.
She picks up a bowl and inhales deeply over it...

Helen Woah, woah, woah. What are you doing?.

Delphine Oh, don't worry, it's not drugs, just potpourri.

Helen Potpourri? Really?

Delphine Yeah, I know, but it really gets the prophetic juices flowing.

Helen Gross.

Delphine Oh, here we go, I think it's starting...

Helen I'm not sure I want to watch this...

Delphine Oh don't be such a baby. I'm just channeling the divine spirit of forethought.

Helen That's what I'm worried...

Delphine *(Suddenly in deep, booming voice)*
If for adventure and purpose you seek,
And an end to a life that's mild and meek,
Then to the isle of Ithaca you must set sail,
And greet Queen Penelope, lest you fail.

Helen *(After a pause)* Is that it?

Delphine Ummm... yep. Seems so. That's all you're getting.

Helen And in rhyming couplets? Seriously?

Delphine That's what happens when you put the god of poetry in charge of prophecy I'm afraid. Blame Zeus for the the budget cuts.

Helen Well, thanks very much.

Delphine Welcome. Now, I'd get going to Ithaca, if I were you.

Exeunt



Scene 9 – Ariadne v. Feather-Pony v. Hercules

Lights up on ARIADNE and SILENUS

Silenus Done it is, my young apprentice. Complete your training is.

Ariadne What, just like that? Seems a bit quick.

Silenus The power of montage, never underestimate.

Ariadne Oh, well, if you say so. Does that make me a hero, then?

Silenus A hero, you do not become, simply with some training. Long and difficult the hero's path is. Prove yourself you must.

Ariadne Alright, sorry I asked.

Enter ATHENA

Athena He's right, Ariadne.

Ariadne Oh, hi Athena.

Athena Hi. I mean BEHOLD! Zeus sends a task for thee - you must go to the land of the Ionians, and slay the beast which ravages them.

Ariadne Oh, a beast, cool, can do. What kind of beast is it?

Athena It is called the Hippogriff.

Ariadne What's one of those?

Athena It has the front quarters of a horse, and the hind quarters of an eagle.

Ariadne You do know that that name in no way conveys what it actually is, don't you. It sounds like half a hippo and half a Gryffindor....

Athena No it doesn't!

Ariadne Yes it does. Can't we call it something a bit more descriptive... like a feather-pony?

Athena Look, does it matter what it's called? You've still got to kill it.

Ariadne Not a problem. Silenus put me through a monster-slaying module.

Athena Good. I will transport us immediately to the lair of the hippogriff.

Ariadne Hey, this teleportation thing is really handy, isn't it.

Silenus Useful for the sake of the plot, it most certainly is.

Athena It's not teleportation....

ATHENA takes them both by the hand and 'transports' them. Look, I'll be honest, I'm not sure of the best way to convey this. Take it as a sign of my faith in OULES directors.

Ariadne Where's this alleged goose-donkey then?

Silenus Hippogriff...

Athena It doesn't seem to be here...

Enter HERCULES & CLODIUS

Hercules That's because it isn't.

Silenus Hercules!

Hercules Si! Whassup, dude?

Athena What are you doing here, Hercules?

Hercules Hey, 'Thenie. Great party at Apollo's the other night, wasn't it. You've got the moves on the dancefloor, girl.

Athena Don't try my patience, hero.

Hercules Yeah, yeah, whatever. Who's the chick with the face like one of Zeus' thunderbolts then?

Ariadne Is that meant to be me? My name's Ariadne, and I'm here to mash hippogriff.

Hercules Don't sweat it, sweetcheeks, Hercules has it covered. I dealt with the problem. It's now an ex-hippogriff. Just ask Clodius here. He's my publicist, he saw the whole thing.

Clodius It's true. He came, he saw, he kicked its ass. Great story, it's going to play brilliantly with the 16-24 demographic back in Rome. I'm thinking 'Hercules: Man and Beast' for the title.

Hercules With a big picture of my abs on the front cover?

Clodius As always. With a bit of luck, we'll have the contract signed for a

sequel within the week.

Ariadne So what are you, some kind of writer?

Clodius I prefer the term 'mythic brand manager'. I make sure Hercules' exploits register with the consumer. I put his adventures in literary form.

Ariadne What, like epic poetry?

Clodius We find the whole Homeric hexameter genre is a bit old hat. Our focus groups indicate that our target audience really don't have the attention-span for 12000 line poems. So we've moved towards shorter, more easily consumed forms. Specifically, haikus.

Ariadne What, you write haikus about what he does?

Clodius Certainly.

Ariadne Go on then. Do a haiku about him killing the hippogriff.

He strikes a 'poetic' pose

Clodius Hercules defeats
A dreadful and wrath-filled beast
He is so awesome

Ariadne That last line had 6 syllables.

Clodius No it didn't.

Ariadne (*Thinks about it again for a moment*) Damn it!

Hercules Alrighty! Well, ace seeing you all here. Athena - catch you at Dionysus' next bash. Silenus...

Silenus Now - off - you - must - piss

Hercules Hey, dude, chill. What's got your goat?

SILENUS has to be physically restrained by Athena

Hercules Goat... cos' he's like a satyr, and they're, like half goat... Oh, never mind. Ariadne, look me up some time. I could teach you a thing or two about hero-ing... and maybe more.

ARIADNE mimes wretching

Hercules Come on Clodius, I'm sure the townsfolk are going to want to throw a massive one in my honour....

Exit HERCULES & CLODIUS

Ariadne That man makes me physically ill...

Athena Come on. We're not going to let him get away with this. We're going to see Zeus about this.

Exeunt

HERCULES
Oxford University Light Entertainment Society

10 - A QUEST!

Lights up on the wine bar, sans Dionysus, clearly. PERSEUS, THESEUS & JASON are still there, looking as miserable as ever.

Jason We're out of booze... again.

Perseus What are we going to do now then?

Theseus *(After a short pause)*... Class A drugs?

Jason Has it really come to this? We used to be adventurers, thrilling the crowds with our epic, if slightly camp, feats.

Theseus I know, we sang a whole song about it.

Perseus Oh shut up Theseus. This is no time for breaking the fourth wall. This is all your fault.

Theseus *(Threateningly)* You what mate?

Perseus If you hadn't been semi-comatose, we would have been able to take them, and Di wouldn't have been kidnapped.

Theseus They were three gods, for Zeus' sake. We didn't stand a chance.

Perseus Is that what you think? You're a coward!

Theseus *(Rising)* Oh yeah?

Perseus Yeah.

Theseus I killed a minotaur, Perce. 8 foot tall, half man, half bull. I can take you any time.

Perseus Oooh, everyone make way for Theseus the cow-slayer. If we ever want burgers, we'll know who to call. Ever heard of a gorgon, pal?

Theseus draws his sword

Theseus Come on then, let's see what you've got.

Perseus *(Drawing his own sword)* Oh, it is on!

Jason *(Leaping between the two of them)* Stop it! Neither of you is the enemy here.

Perseus We don't have enemies any more. That's the problem.

Jason We do, though...

Theseus What do you mean?

Jason Maybe Hades has done us a favour. We can't drink anymore, and our friend has been kidnapped. Well, it's obvious isn't it. We have to go and rescue him.

Perseus But that's insane

Theseus It's far too dangerous...

The theme from 'Back When We Were Heroes' plays in the background, softly. The subtle touch please, dear pianist.

Jason Far too dangerous? *(He puts his arms around Theseus and Perseus, pulling them closer)* We're heroes, aren't we? Danger is what we live for. Theseus, when you killed the minotaur... that wasn't safe was it. It was a raging half-bull in the middle of a labyrinth.

Theseus It had these massive horns...

Jason Exactly. And Perseus, when you went after the gorgon, that was dangerous, wasn't it. You had to be brave....

Perseus Really, really brave.

Jason Damn right you were. Why's this any different?

Perseus So you're suggesting.... A quest?

Jason A quest!

Theseus To the underworld?

Jason To the underworld!

Perseus To rescue Dionysus?

Jason And to prove to the whole world that we're still heroes.

Perseus Well, what are we waiting for then?

Theseus Let's get going!

JASON starts to sing 'Back When We Were Heroes'

Perseus We've got to wait till Act 2 for our reprise, idiot.

They go to leave, purposefully. As they do...

Theseus Does anyone know the way to the underworld?

Jason We'll work it out!

Exeunt

OWLERS
Oxford University Light Entertainment Society

Scene 11 – This is Sparta

Lights up on PHOEBE & CASSANDRA. On the backdrop is hung a sign that reads ‘This is Sparta’

Phoebe Right, we’ve had a chat backstage, and we’ve decided that this time, I’m introducing the scene.

Cassandra ‘Decided’ is one word for it. You threatened to stab a stylus through my wind-pipe.

Phoebe As I said... we decided that I’d be doing this scene. So, now we pick up the adventures of Odysseus who, if you remember, has just landed with his crew in Sparta. ‘So what?’ I hear you ask.

Cassandra Literally no one has asked that.

Phoebe ‘So what?’ you’re probably thinking. Well, the land of Sparta is famous throughout all the world for its fearsome warriors. Basically, did you ever see the film *300*?

Cassandra I didn’t...

Phoebe Probably for the best, it wasn’t very good.

Cassandra Then why bring it up?

Phoebe It’s a relevant cultural frame of reference, isn’t it?

Cassandra Not to anyone who hasn’t seen it.

Phoebe Look, I’m just trying to find a simple way of explaining who the Spartans are, aren’t I?

Cassandra Couldn’t you just say that they’re the hegemonic oligarchy of the Lacedaemonian *polis*, famed for their martial tendencies and brutal educational methods.

Phoebe I’m not sure that’s going to help very much...

Cassandra I’m sure all will quickly become apparent.

Phoebe Fine, fine, I’m just not sure we’re doing a very good job at this chorus thing.

Cassandra It’s not as easy as it looks, is it?

Exit PHOEBE & CASSANDRA. Enter ODYSSEUS, TIM, PERRY & AL

Odysseus So, Tim, your bright idea to get us home is trying to ask the Spartans for directions... The Spartans.

Tim Well, sir, I didn't actually specify the Spartans, but since we're here...

Al I don't understand, what's so bad about the Spartans.

Perry What isn't so bad about the Spartans?

Al I don't know what, that's why I asked.

Tim The Spartans... they're... well, they're...

Leonidas *(O/S)* Hoots mon!

Odysseus Oh bugger...

Enter LEONIDAS, followed by STELIOS & MINDAROS

Leonidas Och aye, we've got ourselves some invaders.

Odysseus *(Faintly)* We really aren't invaders...

Leonidas Do you not know where you are, laddy?

Odysseus *(Faintly)* We do actually...

Leonidas THIS! IS! SPARTA!

**Stelios &
Mindaros** SPARTA!

Tim Oh dear Zeus...

Odysseus Yes, certainly... it's just...

Perry *(Whispered)* Shall we ask them how we should get home, sir?

Odysseus Yes, thank you, I was just coming to that. Now... umm... Hail Spartans!

Leonidas Look at this boys... This son of a Erymanthian boar thinks he can just walk in here all 'Hail Spartans'. Bastard.

**Stelios &
Mindaros** Bastard!

Odysseus Sorry, I just... my name's Odysseus and this...

Leonidas And do you know how much of a damn I give about your name? One gorgon's fart.

Stelios & Mindaros Fart!

Odysseus Yes, yes, sorry I mentioned it. It's just... it's just...

Tim We've got a question for you...

Leonidas And I've only got one question for you, pal - what do you think you're doing here. THIS IS SPARTA!

Stelios & Mindaros Sparta!

Perry Look, we wanted to ask you if you knew the way to Ithaca?

Leonidas Where the Hades is Ithaca?

Al That's what we're trying to find out. It's our home.

Leonidas You're from Ithaca? Well you can sod off back there, can't you.

Odysseus That is exactly what we're trying to do!

Leonidas Don't play clever with me pal. Now, go on. Piss off!

Stelios & Mindaros Off!

Al Or what...

Leonidas Or we'll make you.
They brandish their weapons threateningly.

Odysseus It's quite alright. We'll be going.

Perry But...

Odysseus We will be going. NOW!
Exit ODYSSEUS at high speed, followed by TIM, PERRY & AL

Leonidas Aha! Another great victory for the mighty Leonidas and his brave Spartan lads. Eh, boys?

Mindaros We sure showed them, sir.

Leonidas We sure did, Mindaros. Now, let's get back home. With any luck we'll run into a couple of armies on our way back. I could use some exercise. HA!

Mindaros HA!

STELIOS very noticeably, does not say HA, but is instead staring thoughtfully into the middle distance.

Mindaros Stelios! You didn't say HA!

Stelios Sorry, I was just thinking...

Leonidas You were doing WHAT!

Mindaros WHAT!

Leonidas You know the rules Stelios. We don't stand for thinking in Sparta...

Mindaros Sparta!

Leonidas Shut up, Mindaros.

Stelios I know, it's just... it's a bit strange isn't it. Those sailors, turning up from nowhere, pretending to be lost.

Leonidas Aye, and we got rid of them pretty fast.

Stelios But what if they were... they might have been spies from Athens or Corinth. They might be going back to report on our armies.

Mindaros But they said they were from Ithaca...

Stelios They might have been lying.

Mindaros Who would dare to lie to Leonidas of Sparta and two of his finest warriors?

Stelios Isn't it worth checking?

Leonidas Here's what we're going to do. We'll go after them, and hunt them down. And then we'll kill them.

Mindaros Hooray!

Leonidas That way, if they are spies, they'll never report back. And if they're not... Well, they'll be dead. So they won't mind.

Stelios Good plan.

Leonidas Come on then, lads! For Sparta!

**Stelios &
Mindaros** Sparta!

Exeunt



Scene 12 – Ithaca

Lights up on the throne-room of Ithaca. Yes, another throne room. Sorry.

Melly I've got your diary for the day, Queen Penelope, would you like me to run you through it?

Penelope Certainly, thank you Melantho.

Melly At 11 o'clock you're due to visit a grain-store in the city. Then you've got a lunch meeting with the Athenian ambassador, who wants to talk to you about a potential naval pact to contain Spartan expansionism. Then this afternoon, you're chairing a cabinet meeting. I'll take you through the agenda on our way in.

Penelope Excellent. So, what am I doing for the rest of the morning?

Melly I'm afraid your suitors are back, ma'am.

Penelope Oh not again! Don't they know that the Queen of Ithaca has better things to do than find a husband. We don't even know Odysseus is dead!

Melly It has been 20 years, ma'am...

Penelope I know, Melly, I know. Well, why don't you send them in. Let's see what new idiocies they've prepared for today...

Melly Yes, ma'am.

Exit Melly. She returns rapidly, followed by the suitors, namely Antinous, Ctesippus and Elatus.

Antinous Penelope! How the Hades are you?

Penelope That's Queen Penelope to you, Antinous.

Ctesippus We have something to say to you.

Penelope Do you indeed, Ctesippus? Well, I don't have anything to say to you, I'm afraid. I can barely even pronounce your name.

Antinous We are here to give you an ultimatum!

Penelope Indeed? Would it be the one you gave me last week? And the 500 weeks before that.

Elatus Odysseus has been gone twenty years. You must choose one of us!

Penelope I must admit I'm a little surprised to see you here Elatus. Don't you already have a wife?

Elatus Ummm... no... I mean... yes, but I'm prepared to get a divorce so as to do my civic duty. It is time for you to have a husband and Ithaca to have a king.

Penelope Ithaca seems to be doing just fine as it is. GDP growth is up 8% overall and 6% per capita, the literacy rate has almost doubled in the last decade, and we've just been named the Panhellenic City-State of Culture for the third year running.

Melly And we just won a record medal tally at the Olympics...

Ctesippus Yeah... but we haven't had a good war in ages.

Penelope Why exactly do you want a war? Everyone always gets killed.

Ctesippus I bought some really nice new armour ages ago and I haven't been able to wear it because you've stopped all the fighting and it's not fair.

Penelope Poor you.

Antinous This is irrelevant. We thought you might be hard to persuade so we've come up with... a SONG!

Penelope *(In disgust)* You've done what...

Elatus That's right: a song! Come on lads!

Penelope Stop them, Melly!

But it's too late! The suitors have already formed a chorus line and break into...

Song! - Please, Please Marry Me!

Featuring some increasingly elaborate boasts and some increasingly tenuous metaphors about Penelope.

Penelope Dear gods, what did I do to deserve that.

Melly Would you like me to escort these gentlemen out ma'am?

Penelope Yes please Melly. And while you're at it, could you find some guards to arrest them for crimes against music?

Exeunt

Scene 13 – Meanwhile, in the Underworld...

Lights up on HADES, sat centre stage, on a 'throne'. Around him her PERSEPHONE & CHARON. Sat nearby, tied up, is DIONYSUS.

Hades So, Dionysus, what do you think of my Kingdom of Darkness?

Dionysus *(Taking a look around)* Pretty dull, if you ask me.

Hades The river Styx, dull? The mighty gates of Erebus, guarded by a huge three-headed dog, dull? The endless Fields of Asphodel, home to a billion billion souls, dull? My great palace, carved from glittering onyx, with it's throne of a thousand skulls, dull?

Dionysus *(Pointing to Hades chair)* Throne of a thousand skulls? That's not a throne of a thousand skulls.

Hades *(Primly)* My throne of a thousand skulls is currently not in use. It's being repainted so as to make it even darker and more terrifying than before.

Dionysus Sure it is.

Charon Shall I take him out to the dungeons, my dread lord?

Hades No, no, Charon, that's alright. He can make all the cheap cracks he likes. He's my prisoner, and there's nothing he can do about it.

Dionysus That's just what I want you to think. I'm actually about to unleash my epic godly powers on you.

Hades And what powers do you have, as the god of wine, that are going to help you in this situation?

Dionysus I have some absolutely corking powers thank you very much.

Persephone *(Groans)* Can't we just throw him into the Pit of Tartarus.

Hades Now, now, don't worry dear. He won't be making terrible puns when he sees what we have in store.

Dionysus Oh dear gods of Olympus. I'm caught up in a megalomaniacal plot aren't I? Come on then, what is this brilliant plan?

Hades Ummm... it's a secret.

Dionysus Is it by any chance to usurp Zeus as King of the Gods, thereby taking over the world?

Hades Umm... no... in no way... how did you know?

Dionysus Only that you've been trying to do the same thing for... oh, I don't know, the last eternity or so. So come on then, how are you going to do it this time?

Hades Oh no, you're not going to get me monologue-ing that easily.

Dionysus Of course, sorry I asked.

Hades That's alright.

Dionysus There's no harm in me trying to guess though, is there?

Hades On no account start trying to guess!

Dionysus I'm here, so I must be necessary. Perhaps you want me to get the guardians of Olympus drunk, so that you can attack?

Charon Ha! Wrong! We're not doing that!

Dionysus Good, well, that eliminates one possibility.

Persephone Nice going, Charon. Why don't you just give him some clues?

Dionysus Wow, you guys are such a slick team. I'm really impressed. Zeus will be quaking in his almighty sandals.

Hades Damn you, Dionysus. Damn you to hell.

Dionysus Didn't you already do that, you know, by bringing me here.

Persephone Oh, please can we throw him into Tartarus?

Dionysus Whatever happened to you Persephone? You used to be such a nice young spring goddess. Sunshine and roses. Literally.

Persephone Yeah, and it was really boring, wasn't it. You try being sweetness and light for all eternity.

Dionysus So this is a rebellious phase?

Persephone You wish. I'm a fully fledged villain, and you and the rest better get used to it.

Hades It was Persephone who gave me the inspiration for my plan.

Dionysus How so?

Hades When Persephone is in the underworld, spring can't come, and the world is stuck in perpetual winter.

Dionysus Oh yeah, I thought it had been a bit chilly lately.

Persephone A bit chilly? The forces of nature themselves have been cast into chaos.

Dionysus Can't say I'd noticed.

Hades Trust me the humans have. But you're right, it doesn't make much difference to the gods in the ever-bright courts of Olympus. But what if there was one god you could capture that would affect them... Who could that be, I thought to myself?

Dionysus The suspense is killing me.

Charon You, obviously!

Dionysus I know that, I was just trying to lighten the mood. You think Zeus will really be bothered that the god of wine is missing.

Hades But you're not just the god of wine are you. You're the god of revelry and celebration. Without you, Zeus' palace will fall silent. Where once there was light and joy, only gloom will remain. Zeus will be so downcast that he will lose his wits, the defences of Olympus will slip, and I will claim the throne!
Mwahahahahahahaha!

Dionysus I must admit, that's ingenious.

Hades Thank you.

Dionysus Of course, you have just revealed your entire plan to me, which I'm pretty sure you were determined not to do 2 minutes ago. That's some first class villain-ing right there.

Hades ... Damn it!

Dionysus Mind you, there's not an awful lot I can do about it. Unless someone were to try and rescue me of course...

Charon They wouldn't do that, would they?

Dionysus Probably not. Still wouldn't it be awful if they did?

Hades Silence Dionysus! Stop picking holes in my entirely brilliant and

practical plans!

Persephone There's only one way to teach him a lesson, O mighty Hades! A villain song!

Hades Sorry?

Persephone Singing a song about our diabolical plans will allow us to reassert our malevolent superiority.

Hades You think so?

Persephone Definitely.

Hades Oh, very well. Hit it. Maestro!

Song!- We're the Villains and We're Definitely Going To Win
A jazzy number in which our villains express absolute confidence in their eventual victory.

Persephone How do you feel now?

Hades Much better, thank you.

Exeunt

Scene 14 - The Challenge

ZEUS is sat on his throne, looking somewhat glum. Enter ATHENA, ARIADNE, AND SILENUS

Athena Hail, Mighty Zeus.

Zeus Humph.

Athena We must speak with you, father.

Zeus Harumph.

Athena Harumph? Behold the wise words of the Lightning Bearer.

Zeus Alright, Athena, no need to get sarcy with me. This is a crisis.

Athena We'll say it is. You do know that your insufferable demi-god son has been going around nicking my champion's heroic missions?

Silenus A bloody nuisance, it is.

Zeus What are you going on about? I'm talking about a real emergency. My treacherous brother Hades has kidnapped Dionysus and is holding him prisoner in the Underworld.

Athena What!

Zeus I know. I'm appalled. And we're starting to run low on merlot.

Ariadne Still, surely there's time to sort out our problem. Hercules has been interfering with your challenge. He killed the hippogriff you had sent me to slay!

Zeus Who's this?

Athena Ariadne.

Zeus Gezundheit.

Athena She's my champion.

Zeus Yes, yes, yes. Now, what are we going to do to get Dionysus back? What we could really do with is some sort of rescue mission. But what we'd need for that is a hero...

Ariadne starts to step forward, her hand raised. At which point, enter Hercules & Clodius.

Hercules Did somebody say 'hero'?

Athena Hercules! What are you doing *here*?

Hercules Apparently Di's gone missing. I heard that on the grape-vine... if you'll pardon the pun... actually hang on a minute, that was quite good. Clodius, make a note of that.

Clodius I'll look into a stand-up tour for you sir.

Hercules Ace. Anyway, I heard on the 'grape-vine'... he he he... that Di had gone missing and there was a death-defying quest on the cards. Only one person to call for that. Hercules!

Zeus Good to see you, son. You're just the man we need for a situation like this.

Ariadne If I might interrupt, I was about to volunteer.

Hercules Hey, Andromeda, honey...

Ariadne Ariadne

Hercules Yeah, yeah, whatever. Why don't you sit this one out and let the experts take care of this one?

Ariadne I don't think so. It sounds like this mission will need more brains than brawn.

Hercules Oh, trust me, I've got the brains. And the brawn. And the brownies.

Clodius Except not the last one.

Hercules Except not the last one.

Zeus Well, given that Hercules has offered his services...

Athena How about a compromise? How about Hercules and Ariadne make the attempt together?

Hercules Thanks, but no thanks Athena. Real heroes work alone.

Silenus Your publicist, excet?

Hercules Well, Clodius doesn't really help kill the monsters or anything, he's

more just sort of there for the ride. Ain't that right, Clod?

Clodius Yes, sir. In fact, I feel a haiku on all this coming on.

Hercules Fire away.

Clodius Once more he sets forth
The great hero Hercules
From heav'n's golden gates.

Ariadne That last line had 6 syllables!

Clodius No it didn't. Heav'n was contracted. One syllable.

Ariadne Damn it!

Zeus Alright, alright enough with the poetry! Zeus has come to a decision.

Silenus About time, it is.

Zeus I can do without the snark, satyr. This is what we're going to do. Hercules and Ariadne will both attempt to rescue Dionysus from the clutches of Hades. If either of them manages it, he... I mean they... will be declared Greece's greatest hero! It's brilliant. A story for the ages right there.

Ariadne Unless we both die horrifically?

Zeus Especially if you both die horrifically.

Hercules Sweet. This'll be easy. Across the Styx, kick Hades' arse, back with Dionysus for a massive piss-up. Come on Clodius.

Exit Clodius and Hercules, in a flourish of self-satisfaction

Ariadne Well, I suppose we'd better be going as well.

Athena Ariadne, I cannot accompany you on this quest.

Ariadne What? Why? Have you got some other major crisis in the Olympian Pantheon to deal with?

Athena No god can enter Hades' realm without his permission. It is forbidden by our ancient laws.

Ariadne Aren't they more like guidelines?

Zeus They are certainly not more like guidelines. They are the very foundations of our authority.

Silenus With you, I will be. The end until.

Ariadne I mean, thanks Silenus, but I was rather hoping for an immortal goddess on side.

Silenus (*Sarcily*) Well thanks very much.

Athena This quest is yours and yours alone, Ariadne. You are ready.

Ariadne Well, alright then. Let's do it.

Zeus I bid thee farewell, Ariadne. May the blessings of almighty Zeus go with you. That's me by the way. In case you weren't clear.

Exit Ariadne and Silenus

Athena I do hope they make it back in one piece.

Zeus Seems quite unlikely to me.

Exit Zeus and Athena. Give it a few beats, then enter Cassandra and Phoebe.

Cassandra Well, that looks like a moment of narrative crisis.

Phoebe (*Sighs*)

Cassandra What?

Phoebe You and your 'moments of narrative crisis'. Can't you just say it's the end of the first act and everyone should go and get their gin?

Cassandra Shouldn't we try to sum up and reflect on what's happened up to this point?

Phoebe Seems a bit futile to me. And it'll increase the amount of time the audience have to wait to get alcohol, which can never be a good thing.

Cassandra Good point, well made. Now come on. Let's try to get to the front of queue.

Phoebe See you after the interval, folks!

Exeunt and blackout.

Act the Second

Scene 1 - Delphi *ex machina*

Enter PHOEBE & CASSANDRA. PHOEBE is definitely accompanied by some form of alcohol, and isn't particularly coherent

Phoebe Wahey! It's time for Act 2!

Cassandra Oh gods. I told you not to have that second gin.

Phoebe Ariadne's on her way to rescue Di... Di... Diorama?

Cassandra Dionysus... the god of wine.

Phoebe Wine? Wahey!

Cassandra Oh for Zeus' sake! Why do you have to ruin everything?

Phoebe I don't ruin everything.

Cassandra Yes you do! You won't let me do serious theatre! You keep trying to make into a complete farce.

Phoebe Ha... farce.

Cassandra Farce isn't a funny word! You're turning it into some kind of pantomime.

Phoebe No I'm not.

Cassandra Yes you are.

Phoebe Oh no I'm not.

Cassandra Stop it! Stop it now!

PHOEBE says nothing but gently hugs CASSANDRA

Phoebe Love you, Cassie.

Cassandra Oh shut up. And don't call me Cassie. Come on, let's get you sobered up.

Exit CASSANDRA & PHOEBE. Enter ODYSSEUS.

Odysseus Captain's log, midday, 20th July 874 B.C. Well, that whole asking for directions thing went about as well as I expected. Having barely

escaped from the land of the tight-shortened homicidal maniacs, we have now landed Zeus knows where. I just hope that's the end of Timon's bright ideas.

Enter TIM, PERRY & AL

Timon Sir, I've had another bright idea!

Odysseus Well, I should probably have seen that coming.

Perry We've been looking at a map, sir.

Odysseus What! You know my feeling about maps! I thought I'd confiscated them all. They are entirely against the spirit of sailing. It's just cheating.

Tim I know, sir, but, by my calculation, we've arrived at Delphi. And I was thinking, maybe we could ask the Oracle how to get home.

Odysseus I feel that if maps are out, asking divine assistance is probably on the dodgy side.

Perry Please, sir. The Oracle's usually really mystical and everything. It's not like she's just going to show us the way. She'll probably just say 'If you would to Ithaca go, You must the seed of the turtle tree sow.'

Odysseus You're very quiet, Al. What do you think of all this?

Al I don't really have much to say, sir. I thought an Oracle was something that your wore in your eye.

Odysseus Great, thanks for that. Well, I suppose, if you insist, we'd better go and find this bloody Oracle of yours.

Enter DELPHINE, with great drama, carrying her potpourri.

Delphine There is no need for that, mortal! Apollo's mouthpiece sees all, and knows all! And I have come to you with a message. Know that the gods of Olympus are great with wrath for thee.

Odysseus What... all of them?

Delphine Yes, all of them. They have seen you travels, and frankly they've found all this too-ing and fro-ing a massive bore.

Perry They should try doing the travelling...

Delphine Yeah, but imagine being up on Olympus, with all of the mortal

realm under your gaze and being like 'Oh they're almost there... finally... no don't turn around, you're just... oh for goodness sake'. So they have sent me with a message for you, foolish Odysseus.

Odysseus Foolish? Odysseus the Cunning, they used to call me. Ever heard of the Trojan horse? That'd be my idea...

Delphine Don't get sassy with me, hero. Too long you have tormented your stout-hearted seamen.

Al What?

Perry She means us, Al. We're stout-hearted seamen.

Al Well that's bloody rude.

Perry Erm... that's not...

Al I'm not at all stout. I've just got thick clothes on.

Delphine I have been sent therefore by Apollo to set you on the path home. Now, excuse me while I sniff this potpourri.

Tim I beg your pardon...

Delphine This potpourri. It's... oh never mind. *(She inhales deeply)*
'Down below the earth you must go,
To a realm without rain or snow,
Hades's land is your destiny,
If home and hearth you wish to see'

Odysseus The Underworld? Sorry, Apollo's grand idea for getting us home is to go to the Underworld? That's the stupidest plan I've ever heard. And that includes dragging a wooden horse full of Greek soldiers into Troy. Did I mention I had a hand in that?

Perry Yes, sir, many, many times.

Delphine Apollo thought you might object, Odysseus. And he said that if necessary I was to literally drag you there.

Odysseus You... drag me? Drag one of the heroes of the Trojan War, the veteran of a thousand battles?

Delphine Don't try me, Odysseus. I'm the priestess of Phoebus Apollo, imbued with immense power.

Odysseus Is that so? Well, my crew will be with me, a loyal man every one of them.

Tim Ummm...

Al We think that maybe we should go with the scary magic lady, sir.

Perry It looks like our best chance of getting home.

Odysseus Oh for Zeus' sake. Fine! I suppose we're going to the Underworld then.

Delphine Excellent! Now come on, gentlemen, quick march. We haven't got much time.

Exit the sailors, pursued by an oracle.

Scene 2 – Helen and Penelope: Dream Team

The throne room at Ithaca, with PENELOPE & MELLY

Melly You've got a visitor, ma'am.

Penelope Really? Who is it?

Melly It's a Miss Ovtroi, ma'am. A Miss H. Ovtroi. I think she must be foreign.

Penelope Yes, is she by any chance stunningly beautiful?

Melly Now that you mention it...

Penelope Yes, I think I know who it is. Show her in will you?

MELLY ushers in HELEN

Helen Hey Penny!

Penelope Well, well, well, Helen of Troy. Welcome to Ithaca. I've heard a lot about you.

Helen All of it good, I hope?

Penelope Not really, no.

Helen Hey, haters gonna hate. I never hurt anybody.

Penelope No you just started a major trans-continental conflict didn't you. From which, incidentally, my husband Odysseus has never returned.

Helen Odysseus? Oh yeah, I remember him. He was cute. I mean, not, like, Paris cute, but not bad for a geek.

Penelope Odysseus is not a geek! He's the wisest and most cunning man in Greece.

Helen Whatever. Where is he by the way?

Penelope I was very much hoping you might be able to tell me. He never returned from Troy.

Helen Well don't look at me. I'm not hiding him in my fabulous hair you know. If he's such a smart alec, he can find his own way home.

Penelope This is beside the point, Helen. What are you doing here?

Helen Oh, well, I was sent here by the Oracle of Delphi to find my purpose.

Melly As in a sling to carry a baby in? Well, I haven't seen one around, but I can always check in the store-rooms...

Penelope She said purpose, Melly, not papoose. And how do you think you're going to find your purpose here?

Helen Hey, honey, don't look at me. I'm just doing what the oracle told me.

Melly Do you not have any ideas?

Helen I don't know really, but I thought, if we, like, maybe, got on a ship, and went for a bit of a sail around it might come to me.

Penelope Well, that sounds like a splendid use of my valuable time!

Helen Really?

Penelope No.

Melly Ma'am, if I may, the Oracle never speaks without cause. Perhaps Lady Helen has been sent here for a reason beyond her vague existential crisis. And if King Odysseus is anywhere, he's probably out at sea. If the gods are good, you might even find him.

Penelope Whose side are you on Melly?

At this moment, enter ANTINOUS, CTESSIPUS & ELATUS

Antinous We demand another audience with you, Penelope.

Penelope I thought I had you locked in the dungeon. How did you escape?

Ctessipus Our love is stronger than any dungeon in the world!

Elatus Also, we bribed the guard.

Melly Hasn't the queen made it quite clear she is not interested in you? She had you imprisoned for Zeus' sake.

Antinous She's just playing hard to get.

Ctessipus Yeah, exactly, she just.... *(he notices Helen)*... woah, pretty lady...

Helen Hey, honey.

The suitors immediately run over to HELEN

Ctessipus My lady, it is an honour to meet you. How about you and I go and take a walk. We could go and have a look at my new chariot.

Antinous Ignore this fool, my lady. However, if you come back to mine, I'll show you my... wild stallion.

Elatus Is this man bothering you, my lady? If he is, I could always fight him for you. I think you'll be impressed by the size of my massive sword. And by sword what I really mean is my...

Penelope LADY HELEN is an honoured guest of Ithaca...

Antinous My lady, I would be delighted to host you in my house for the duration of your stay. I say house, it's actually more of a palace.

Ctessipus Me too!

Elatus Me three!

Helen It's very kind of you gentlemen to offer, but I've come here to see the Queen, and should probably stay in palace. However, I'm sure Queen Penelope will be throwing lots of feasts in my honour, and you'd be welcome to join us... every evening... as my guests... unless the Queen had alternative plans... you know, somewhere else to go...

Penelope *(Realising she's been outmaneuvered)* You know Helen, I've thought some more about what you said, and I think perhaps we ought to go in search of your purpose in life.

Helen Oh really? I'm so glad you've had a change of heart.

Penelope Melly, do you think you can keep things under control around here?

Melly Of course ma'am. You can count on me.

Penelope Alright Helen, let's go. You better hope to the gods of Olympus that there's something behind all this.

Helen Awesome!

Exit Helen and Penelope

Melly Right, gentlemen. Who wants to come and see the new chariot we just got? Wouldn't that be nice?

Suitors Me! Me! Me!

Exeunt

Scene 3 - Hades sets a trap

Lights up on the Underworld. HADES is on his throne of evil, with PERSEPHONE by his side. DIONYSUS is still tied up on the floor.

Hades Well, Dionysus, three days in the Underworld, and still no one has come to rescue you. Perhaps Zeus has resigned himself to his fate. The world shall soon be mine!

Dionysus Sure, you keep telling yourself that, if it makes you happy.

Enter CHARON, looking a trifle discombobulated

Charon My lord Hades! Our spies in the world above report movements!

Persephone You mean a rescue mission?

Charon It would seem so, ma'am

Dionysus Rule number 46, Hades. Never tempt fate by gloating. Did you never read the Big Book of Stock Villainy?

Hades Shut up, Dionysus. I am invincible!

Dionysus Clearly not. Remind me to buy you a copy. It'll keep you entertained in Zeus' dungeon.

Persephone Which hero have they sent, Charon? Must be someone pretty powerful. Aeneas? Bellerophon?

Charon Ummm... No ma'am... it's not just one of them. There's Hercules, he's definitely on his way. And Jason, Perseus and Theseus as well. And some girl called Ariadne...

Hades Harry who now?

Charon Ariadne, my lord. Don't know much about her, but she appears to have been trained by Silenus himself.

Persephone This is serious, my love. We hadn't anticipated a whole mythology worth of heroes being thrown at us.

Hades Indeed. Clearly my brother has more allies to call on than I thought.

We're going to need a plan.

Dionysus Oh goody, can I help?

Persephone Shut up, Dionysus

Dionysus But I'm super good at plans. Plan drunk, edit sober, that's my policy. Except not the last bit, usually. So basically, just get drunk and do the thing.¹

Persephone I wouldn't have expected any better from the god of wine.

Dionysus So what's your idea? Go and make a daisy-chain?

Persephone Can people stop going on about the spring thing? I am a total badass, do you hear?

Dionysus Sure you are. Wait till I tell mummy Demeter what her little baby's been up to. She won't be pleased. This isn't the sort of thing the daughter of the farming goddess is supposed to get up to.

Persephone Right, that's it! You asked for it!

Dionysus What are you going to do? Set a horde of vicious baby lamb-ikins on me, armed to the teeth with some really nasty spring onions?

Hades Don't let him get to you, dear.

Dionysus Hark who's talking.

Charon My lord, do you not think Dionysus might be trying to distract us from making plans in order to buy his rescuers more time?

Dionysus Well, it looks like someone around here's got some brains.

Hades RIGHT! Yes, a plan. Nobody panic. Here's what we're going to do. Persephone and I will prepare the defences of my black fortress of doom.

Dionysus That sounds suspiciously like sitting round on your arse doing nothing.

¹ The author decline to comment on whether or not this reflects the approach to writing the script...

Hades MEANWHILE! Charon, you will go to the River Styx, and set up an ambush for the heroes as they enter the Underworld.

Charon Yes, my lord. I will not fail you.

Dionysus Nice going Hades. Getting your minions to do your dirty-work for you is definitely the best way to keep them on side.

Hades Right, that is it. Everyone get to work. And someone please go and get a gag for Dionysus.

Dionysus Well... I didn't realise that it was that kind of party...

All Shut up Dionysus!

Exeunt

Scene 4 – In which Perseus has a highly cunning plan...

PERSEUS, JASON & THESEUS are sat on the ground, looking morose.

Jason So, what you're telling me is... you seriously expect me to believe that... none of us know the way to the Underworld?

Perseus Don't look at me, I did extra-curricular monster slaying during supernatural geography lessons at school.

Theseus I think I've got something... It probably won't be that helpful though.

Jason Go on Theseus, anything's going to be useful.

Theseus Well, I seem to remember that to get to the Underworld you have to... this is going to sound crazy... but you have to go over a river of sticks. So maybe if we could find a river with wood in it...

He tails off under the others' withering gaze

Perseus Well done, Theseus, I think you may just have said the one thing that could make everything worse...

Jason For future reference, it's the River Styx. S-T-Y-X. Styx.

Theseus Oh, that makes more sense. I thought it sounded a bit odd. *(Pause)* Because rivers usually have water in them, don't they...

Jason That's it, I'm going to kill him!

He starts to attack Theseus

Perseus Wait a minute! That's brilliant! Jason, leave off him for a sec...

Jason What is it?

Perseus In order to get to the Underworld... the world of the dead... all we need to do is... die!

Theseus Umm... we don't really have the time to wait around until we all get really old, Perseus. Who knows what might have happened to Dionysus by then...

Perseus Well, we can probably find some way to speed the process up. And then, we'll wake up in Hades' kingdom, and be able to go and rescue

him.

Jason Yes... are we not perhaps slightly worried that this might be one of those plans that sounds like a good idea at the time... but you end up kind of regretting?

Perseus Come on, Dionysus needs us, doesn't he. He's our friend. I'm ready to die for him. He'd do the same for us.

Jason I mean, he literally can't. What with being a god and everything.

Perseus That's not the point.

Theseus Perseus is right. We need to get to the Underworld, and that's the quickest way to do it.

Jason Fine. Fine. But if you've made some sort of catastrophic metaphysical misjudgement here, and we all end up in the Viking afterlife or something by mistake, I am definitely blaming you for the rest of eternity.

Perseus That's fair enough.

Theseus So, how do you think we should do it? We don't have any poison or anything.

Perseus Well, the quickest and easiest solution would be to run into a gang of homicidal maniacs, and goad them into killing us.

Jason Oh come on. What are the chances of us running into a gang of homicidal maniacs?

Leonidas (O/S) Hoots mon!

Perseus Aha! Right on cue.

Jason I don't believe it...

Enter LEONIDAS, STELIOS & MINDAROS

Leonidas Damn it lads, looks like we've lost those spies.

Mindaros Look over there, sir. More spies!

Leonidas Aye, looks like we've got some non-Spartan jessies...

Mindaros Jessies!

Theseus Oi! Spartans!

Leonidas You talking to us pal?

Theseus Too right I'm talking to you. How many Spartans does it take to change a light-bulb? 300! Because... your really stupid... and stuff.

Leonidas You trying to be funny?

Jason First rate trash talk there.

Perseus Oh, let me. Hey, Spartans!

Leonidas Yeah?

Perseus Me and my mates here think you're really rubbish and fighting and we could totally take you.

Jason Oh, holy Zeus, we're dead.

Perseus That's the idea, isn't it?

Leonidas That right, pal? You asked for it? Come on lads, for Sparta!

**Stelios &
Mindaros** For Sparta!

A brief fight occurs, in which THESEUS, PERSEUS & JASON get horribly slaughtered.

Jason *(As he dies)* I immediately regret my decision!

Leonidas Another great victory for Sparta! Ha!

Mindaros Ha!

Leonidas Let's sing our victory chant!

Leonidas & *(V. loudly and raucously)* You're just soft Athenian bastards,
Soft Athenian bastards!

Mindaros You're just soft Athenian bastards!

Leonidas Stelios... you didn't join in. Are you thinking again?

Stelios Ummm.... no....

Leonidas You dare to lie to your king?

Stelios Ummm... no...

Leonidas There you go again! Tell us what you were thinking, before I stab you with my massive sword.

Stelios Oh, alright. It just seemed... we won that battle really easily.

Leonidas Of course we did! We're Spartans.

Stelios Yeah, but these guys looked really tough. Like, heroes or something.

Leonidas Well, that just proves we must be getting better at fighting! Now come on! There must be more people to fight around here!

Exeunt

OULES
Oxford University Light Entertainment Society

Scene 5 - Hercules tries it on

Enter SILENUS & ARIADNE

Ariadne Are we nearly there yet?

Silenus Whinging, you must stop.

Ariadne I'm not whinging. I just swear that all this walking is unnecessary. Couldn't Athena just have used her goddess powers to give us a lift to the entrance to the Underworld?

Silenus A quest, this is. Lots of walking, there is supposed to be. In fact, close to the River Styx we are. These are the borders of Hades' land.

Ariadne Awesome.

Silenus Awesome, it is not. Extremely dangerous it is. Careful, we must be.

Ariadne Yeah, yeah. I'm sure it's not anything we can't cope with.

Silenus Do not be foolish, young Ariadne. Now, here you must wait. To find a safe place to cross, I will go.

Ariadne Oh come on. I'm perfectly capable of taking care of myself.

Silenus True this is. But with feet like mine, softly and silently you can move. Not blundering, like a hero.

Ariadne Oh, alright. But if you're not back quickly, I'm coming to look for you.

Exit SILENUS. Enter, subtly, HERCULES, who goes and leans suavely against a bit of set/ the walls of the theatre. ARIADNE sits down to wait, not noticing him. A few seconds of business before...

Hercules Hey.

Ariadne *(Starting)* Holy Zeus!

Hercules Well, not quite. His son though.

Ariadne What are you doing here, Hercules?

Hercules Just thought I'd drop in and check there were no hard feelings between us.

Ariadne What do you mean?

Hercules I know it can be so difficult for a young hero to see us big names

getting all the glory. You'll get there someday. I just wanted you to know that. After all, I'd hate anything to come between us...

Ariadne I'm sorry?

Hercules Mind if I sit?

Ariadne Umm... yes...

HERCULES sits regardless, very close to her.

Hercules By Apollo, the stars are stunning tonight, aren't they.

Ariadne Sorry, are you really talking about the stars?

Hercules Sure. What, you think just because I'm a master monster-fighter with perfectly sculpted pecs, I can't appreciate a beautiful night like this? See those ones up there? That's Orion, the hunter. He's a personal friend actually. I'll introduce you some time.

Ariadne I'm really not interested.

Hercules I'm so sorry. How could I be talking about the stars, when the girl next to me is outshining them by a thousand.

Ariadne What the Hades is going on here?

Hercules You feel it too? This connection between us, baby. It's... divine...

He leans in...

Ariadne Woah, woah woah! What are you doing?

Hercules Ariadne, honey. Surely you know... this was always meant to be...

Song - Love's not in the air tonight

In which Hercules attempts to have a romantic duet with Ariadne, who's not having any of it. The end of the song is cut off by an offstage scream from Silenus

Ariadne Silenus!

Exit ARIADNE, followed rapidly by HERCULES

Scene 6 – Olympic Coverage

Lights up on Olympus. ZEUS is lolling on his throne with a bucket of popcorn, with ATHENA at his shoulder. They're both staring out into the audience, as if watching a 'screen'.

Zeus This is brilliant! Talk about drama right. There hasn't been anything this good on since the last Olympics.

Athena Oh for Zeus' sake!

Zeus There's no need to take my name in vain, thanks very much. What's got your ichor up?

Athena Can't you take this seriously? These are real people who are in trouble, and the fate of Olympus rests on them.

Zeus Well excuse me for trying to kick back and relax.

Athena Hmmph...

Zeus *(With a sigh)* Would you like me to change channels to take your mind off it?

Athena It's fine.

Zeus No really, I don't mind. I've got Chronos, god of time, beaming back Game of Thrones from the 21st century. It's brilliant! I'm on to Season 4 at the moment. Let's watch that instead.

He pulls out a remote and presses it. Give it a few seconds...

Athena Do you think Ariadne's going to be alright?

Zeus Shhh, I'm trying to watch... Oooh that Joffrey! I really hate that guy! I'd love to smite him with my mighty lightning bolt *(Mimes smiting. Actually, any chance we could get him a tin-foil lightning bolt? No, no, I know, silly idea)*

Athena There's no need, he gets poisoned in episode 2.

Zeus What! Oh! What! Spoiler alert! How could you?!

Athena Because we need to focus on the situation at hand! Do you think Ariadne's going to be alright?

Zeus How should I know? I'm omnipotent, not omniscient.

Athena Whatever.

Zeus Look, we can turn back to your precious quest, if it's so important to you.

Athena If you don't mind.

Presses another button on the remote.

Zeus Gods, you've gotten moody since your 5000th birthday.

Athena Right! That's it! I'm going to go watch it at Artemis'.

Zeus Yeah, yeah, run and play.

Exit ATHENA

Zeus Finally, some peace and quiet.

Presses the remote again.

Zeus Ha! You know nothing Jon Snow!

Blackout

Scene 7 - ALL the Melodrama

Lights up on the banks of the Styx. The scene that presents itself is a dramatic one. On one side of the stage is CHARON, looking as potent and menacing as it is possible for a slightly rubbish henchman to look, and carrying a nasty looking sword. SILENUS lies, prone and in pain, centre stage. In the background is CLODIUS, looking slightly shifty. We get a repeat of SILENUS' O/S scream, before ARIADNE & HERCULES enter from the opposite side of the stage to CHARON.

Ariadne *(In alarm)* Silenus! *(She runs and crouches next to him)*

Hercules Clodius! There you are. What's going on...

Clodius *(Pointing at Charon)* It was him... he came out of nowhere... he attacked the satyr...

Hercules What the...

Charon Hades will permit none to enter his realm unchallenged, hero. Did you really think the borders of the Underworld would be so lightly guarded?

Hercules And who by Hermes' reeking sandals, are you?

Charon I am Charon, right hand of Hades, watchman of the Styx. None may pass to the land below without my permission.

Clodius Umm... boss, maybe we should leave this one and try again another day. Discretion is the better part of valour...

Hercules Discretion! I don't know the meaning of the word...

Clodius Look, it's all very well giving it the trash talk....

Hercules Trash talk? I'm just asking you to explain what discretion means. Never heard that one before

Clodius O sweet Aphrodite... Look, wouldn't it be better just to... run for it. Monsters are alright, but this guy's a god.

Hercules Run? Hercules never runs.

CHARON advances threateningly

Hercules Though a temporary tactical retreat may be in order...

Exit CLODIUS and HERCULES

Ariadne What have you done, you monster?

Charon The satyr has been pierced by a blade of the Underworld. There is nothing you can do save join him in death. Hades will welcome the soul of one so brave.

Ariadne *(Drawing her own sword)* Not likely.

Charon *(With a malevolent chuckle)* Don't be foolish girl...

CHARON and ARIADNE lock swords, and after a brief struggle, ARIADNE is forced to her knees.

Charon Time to die, I think.

Leonidas *(O/S)* For Sparta!

Charon What the Hades...

Enter the Spartans.

Leonidas Look boys, another enemy of Sparta.

Mindaros Sparta!

Charon What quarrel can a god have with mortals? Begone from this place!

Mindaros Ooooh, this bloke thinks he's well fancy.

Leonidas Aye, Mindaros, that he does. And you know what we do with fancy blokes in Sparta...

Mindaros Yes, boss. We de-fancy them.

Stelios Is de-fancy a word?

Leonidas It is if I say so, by Ares' right buttock. So what are we waiting for? Let's de-fancy him.

Charon What is this?

Leonidas For Sparta!

Mindaros Sparta!

& Stelios

They charge

Charon Oh, holy Zeus!

Exit CHARON, pursued by irate Spartans.

Ariadne Come on, Silenus. We need to get you help.

Silenus Even Asclepius himself save me now could not. Done, my journey is.

Ariadne No! I won't leave you here.

Silenus You must. Depend upon you, Olympus does. And the world.

Ariadne But how can I defeat Hades? I couldn't even beat his minion.

Silenus See the future, I cannot. But hope a true hero can always have.

Ariadne Silenus...

Silenus A true hero you are, Ariadne....

And with that he dies....

Ariadne No!

Give ARIADNE a few moments to grieve. Then enter HELEN & PENELOPE.

Penelope Look, Helen, it's been fun, but surely this is just a fool's errand. We've come all this way, and I really need to get back to Ithaca.

Helen Oh come on, Penny, let's keep going. The Oracle can't have sent me to you for nothing.

Penelope Why anyone would take the word of a woman who purports to tell the future by sniffing pot-pourri is beyond me...

Helen Penny. My destiny's out here somewhere. There's something special about this place. I can feel it.

Penelope Are you sure that's not just seasickness? We were on that boat for a pretty long time.

Helen Look, who's that there?

Penelope *(Sigh)* I don't know. Could be anybody.

Helen Hi honey. Are you alright? What's your name?

Ariadne Ariadne.

Penelope Ariadne? Princess of Crete? What are you doing in a place like this?

Ariadne I was... I was trying... to get to the Underworld... to rescue Dionysus... but now Silenus is dead...

Penelope Dead! Oh, my poor dear...

Helen Hey, Penny, are you thinking what I'm thinking...

Penelope I don't know Helen. What are you thinking?

Helen This is brilliant. It sounds like just what I've been looking for...

Penelope Helen! Have a bit of tact! The poor girl's distraught...

Helen What?... Oh, yeah. Sure.

Ariadne Are you... are you saying... that you can help me?

Penelope I think, maybe, my dear... that's what we've been sent here to do. Frankly, a journey into the Underworld is not what I had in mind when I left Ithaca. But it appears someone up on Olympus knows what they're doing. For a change.

Helen Let's get going then!

Exit ARIADNE, HELEN & PENELOPE. Give it a few beats, then HERCULES & CLODIUS can slip shiftily across the stage, and off in the same direction

Scene 8 – A Choral Interlude

Enter CASSANDRA & PHOEBE

Cassandra And with that, our heroes enter the Underworld, where dangers untold wait them. Symbolism abounds as they descend into that dark world, both physically and emotionally.

Phoebe Well, someone got their Greek literature GCSE.

Cassandra Look, just shut up will you! We just had the emotional crisis point of our entire play, and you're ruining it with snide remarks.

Phoebe Yeah, yeah.

Cassandra *Recollecting herself* So, this is it. We are rapidly approaching the dramatic climax...

Phoebe Woof!

Cassandra Right, that is it! *(She pulls out a sword)*

Phoebe *(Suddenly frightened)* A sword? Where the Hades did you get a sword?

Cassandra Oh, didn't you know? They have plenty backstage. I nabbed one off Theseus when he wasn't looking. Now, what was that you were saying? It was 'woof' wasn't it... *(She starts to advance on Phoebe, wielding the sword menacingly)*

Phoebe Now, would I say anything so ridiculously immature...

Cassandra I should never have let you drink all that gin in the interval. Now, you're going to behave, and do this properly, or you'll be getting the sharp end of this...

Phoebe ... That's what she said?

Cassandra Graaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaggh!

Exit PHOEBE, pursued by a CASSANDRA

Scene 9 – Clash of the Titans

Lights up on Hades' throne-room. HADES is the, obviously, as are PERSEPHONE, the still bound DIONYSUS, and CHARON, looking very sorry for himself

Hades Charon! I thought you said you wouldn't fail us?

Charon I did my best. Who do you take me for? Ares?

Hades You may not be the god of war...

Charon Too right I'm not the god of war. I'm the boatman of Styx. I carry the souls of the dead. I'm basically a very, very glorified chauffeur.

Hades Oh, stop feeling sorry for yourself.

Charon I'm not feeling sorry for myself. *(He is)*

Hades If I thought you'd be worth the trouble, I'd tie you to a rock and have your liver eaten out for all eternity by a deranged vulture.

Persephone Can we focus on the larger problem here, my love. The army of heroes heading in our direction.

Hades *(Rising dramatically from his throne)* Let them come! Let all the heroes of Greece come and besiege my dread castle! I will show them what it means to defy my will, and challenge the strength of an immortal god!

Persephone Ahem...

Hades Sorry, the strength of two immortal gods!

Charon Ahem...

Hades Alright, alright, three immortal gods... just about.

Charon Thanks very much...

Hades The point is... the point is...

Persephone Mwahahaha?

Hades Exactly. MWAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

PERSEPHONE & CHARON join in the laughter, which is cut off, when JASON, THESEUS & PERSEUS politely poke their heads on stage, perhaps knocking on a handy bit of set.

Perseus Excuse me? Is this the palace of Hades?

Hades *(A bit shellshocked)* Yes. Obviously.

Perseus Oh good. You see, I told you it was the palace of Hades and not a Viking drinking hall. The Ionic columns were a bit of a give away.

Jason It was still worth checking.

Persephone And who, might I ask, are you?

Perseus *(Stepping forward dramatically)* I am Perseus of Argos, slayer of the Gorgon, and husband of Andromeda, and I am here to rescue Dionysus

Jason *(Also stepping forward dramatically)* And I am Jason of Thessaly, Captain of the Argo, husband of Medea and discoverer of the Golden Fleece, and I am here to rescue Dionysus.

Pause

Perseus *(Stage whisper)* Theseus...

Theseus Oh, yes, sorry. *(Steps forward dramatically)* I am Theseus, lover of the Minotaur and slayer of Ariadne and... no, wait, that's not right...

JASON buries his head in his hands. DIONYSUS gives them the thumbs up.

Persephone Ah yes, I remember now. You're the small fry we beat up in Dionysus' bar. Come back for seconds?

Jason Actually, I think you'll find it's final orders.

Theseus Yeah! And it's my round!

There's another brief pause, as everyone looks in confusion at THESEUS

Hades Was that supposed to be trash talk?

Theseus Ummmm... kind of..

JASON & PERSEUS face palm

Hades Look, this is all just idle chatter. Why should this time be any different from last? We'll just kill you.

Perseus Aha! But you can't. You see, we're already dead!

Jason We had ourselves killed in order to get here. You can't touch us Hades!

Hades Yes I can.

Jason What?

Hades Just because your bodies are dead, doesn't mean I can't harm your souls. Throw you into Tartarus, cast you to the Furies, etc., so on and so evil...

Perseus Oh...

Hades Really, gentlemen, if you're going to come in threatening a god, you should really check up on the metaphysics of the scenario first.

Jason Right, well, we'll just have to fight you then.

Persephone Bring it, bitch.

Perseus Come on lads.
PERSEUS & JASON draw their swords and start to advance. THESEUS, notably does not.

Jason Ummm... Theseus... now would be a really good time to help us attack.

Theseus Right, yes, sorry. It's just... you're going to laugh... I appear to have lost my sword.

Perseus Right... that's not good.

Theseus I really don't know what's happened to it. Someone must have nicked it when I was offstage.

Hades Call yourself Greece's mightiest heroes? You can't even keep hold of your weapons.

Hercules (O/S) They're not Greece's mightiest heroes... (coming on stage with Clodius in attendance) I am! (to Perseus, Jason, Theseus) 'Sup guys?

Hades Hercules!

Hercules Hey Uncle Hades! Great to see you. And look who it is! Sephy! Damn girl, I haven't seen you since the Olympus High School for Minor Deities Senior Prom. My, wasn't that a great night. Ooooh yeah!

Hades Seriously? You and this moron?

Persephone That was ages ago! It was Aphrodite's fault, she set us up. I only agreed 'cos Mum wanted me to.

Hercules Sure, sure. (*To Charon*) And hey! It's you! Carebear, isn't it?

Charon Charon. And you seem a lot braver now than you did at the Styx.

Hercules You caught me by surprise, I'll admit it. But I'm ready for you now.

Charon Now you've got three other heroes watching your back.

Hercules Careful now. That kind of big mouth can get you into trouble round me. Just ask the Nemean Lion.

Charon The what?

Clodius It's a reference to one of his previous adventures (*Assumes poet mode*) He faces the beast...

Hades Oh dear Zeus, please, no poetry.

Clodius Maybe later then?

Persephone Maybe never. It's difficult to deliver bad poetry when your soul has been shattered into a million pieces and cast screaming into an infinite void.

Hades Right, time for you to die.

Theseus Oh yeah! Says who!

Hades Says the god of death.

Theseus Oh... right.

Perseus One of these days we really need to talk about your trash talk. I think you need a refresher course.

Jason Let's do this!

Leonidas (*O/S*) Och aye!

Persephone What the holy Zeus is that...

Enter LEONIDAS, STELIOS & MINDAROS

Hades We really need to get some better security round here.

Leonidas Look lads! More pansies!

Mindaros Pansies!

Hades And, who, by Hephaestus' almighty anvil, are you?

Leonidas I am Leonidas, and this is Sparta!

Mindaros Sparta!

Hades No it isn't.

Leonidas You what pal?

Hades This isn't Sparta. This is my realm.

Leonidas And who the Hades are you?

Hades Exactly.

Leonidas What?

Hades I am Hades, lord of the underworld, brother of Zeus, son of Kronos, lord of time, and grandson of the lord of the heavens, Uranus!

Leonidas Hey lads, this guy says his grandfather was my anus!

Persephone Look, Spartans, you like killing people, right?

Leonidas Aye, that we do lassie.

Persephone How would you like to be Hades personal army? Who better than the world's most fearsome warriors to swell the ranks of the dead?

Leonidas Well, I'd have to discuss it with my men. We're all comrades in Sparta.

Persephone Go ahead.

Leonidas Spartans! Huddle!

LEONIDAS, STELIOS & MINDAROS huddle. MINDAROS is surprised

to discover what tea-bagging means. Then, suddenly, LEONIDAS breaks rank.

Leonidas How dare you argue with me, Stelios!

Stelios But I thought you said we had to discuss it, sir. I thought we were comrades.

Leonidas Aye, Stelios, but that doesn't mean you can disagree with me. I'm the King!

Charon I'll never understand Spartan politics.

Leonidas We'll serve Hades, on the condition that he lets us brutally kill all of his enemies!

Hades Agreed by all the gods!

Stelios And puts up a big banner saying 'Sparta rules' up at the entrance of the Underworld.

Hades Fine, if you insist.

Mindaros And a backrub from a legion of undead masseurs every morning and evening?

Hades Don't push your luck. I might chuck in free meals though.

Leonidas Alright then. Come on then lads. Tonight, we dine in hell!

Persephone It's hero crushing time.

Our heroes... and HERCULES... are surrounded by Spartans on one side, and three deities on the other.

Jason Well, guys, I'd say we're going to get the heroes end we wanted...

Theseus We never did get that reprise of our song...

Perseus At least we can go down fighting...

Theseus Maybe you can, I still haven't got a sword...

Hercules Chillax guys. I've got this. I'm Hercules. I'm invincible. Ain't that right, Clod?

Clodius The first bit, maybe, I'm not so sure about the second...

Hercules Of course I am. I'm the greatest warrior in the world

LEONIDAS sneaks up behind HERCULES, who has been facing HADES & co. He taps him on the shoulder, and when he turns around, punches him in the face. HERCULES collapses to the ground.

Leonidas You're not a Spartan, are you, pretty boy.

Hades Well, look at this. Greece's mightiest heroes, surrounded and alone, with no way of defeating me!

Enter ARIADNE, HELEN & PENELOPE

Ariadne They're not Greece's mightiest heroes.

Penelope We are.

Helen Yeah!

Hades Oh, holy Hera, what now?

Penelope We are the heroines of Greek mythology...

Ariadne And we are here to Kick. Your. Arse.

Helen So there...

Penelope Really, Helen. 'So there?'

Helen Well, you two keep on taking all the good lines. I couldn't think of anything badass.

Theseus Ummm... hi Ariadne.

Ariadne Oh, it's you.

Jason You know this bird, Theseus?

Penelope Bird? Really?

Jason Of course, when I say bird, I mean like, a really fierce bird. Like a buzzard or something...

Perseus Good save...

Theseus Yeah, Ariadne here used to be my... erm... fiance.

Jason Oooooohh... the one you...

Theseus Yeah, kind of...

Penelope What?

Ariadne Theseus marooned me on an island when he got bored of me. Apparently ‘Things were moving too fast’ and he ‘needed some space.’

Helen Harsh!

Persephone If I could interrupt this no doubt fascinating gossip session, I’d just like to remind you we were about to have an epic showdown here.

Ariadne Right, yes, sorry. Ahem. Hades, I am here to challenge you. Release Dionysus, and I may not be forced to pulverise you into a million little pieces.

Hades What! I don’t accept challenges from pipsqueak girls. It’s completely beneath me. You’re not even a proper hero. If it was someone like Hercules...

Penelope Is that the same Hercules who is currently lying drooling on the floor?

Hades That’s not the point! Spartans, destroy these insolent pests!

Leonidas Now that’s the kind of order I can get on board with! Come on lads!
The Spartans charge our heroines. After a brief fight, they start to get rather nastily beaten up, and begin to flee off stage.

Leonidas For the honour of Sparta... let’s get out of here!

Charon Where are you going? I thought Spartans never ran away.

Stelios We’re not running away! We’re making a tactical retreat!

Mindaros Tactical retreat!

Stelios Shut up, Mindaros!
Exit Spartans.

Hades Pah! They were but minions! You haven’t won yet.

Ariadne Penelope, Helen, you tackle Charon. Boys, get Persephone. I’ll take the big bad.

Theseus I’d love to help... really would... but I can’t find my sword.

Ariadne Oh for Zeus' sake, Theseus, what is even the point of you?

Enter PHOEBE, carrying the sword.

Phoebe Sorry, sorry, here it is.

Theseus I... I... what...

Phoebe No time to explain, just take it and do the thing...

Theseus Righto...

Exit PHOEBE

Theseus Right, ready!

Ariadne Let's go!

And so begins the fight scene to end all fight scenes. Or whatever can be hashed together during the all-day rehearsal. Anyway, our heroes get generally smashed by the villains, because I've got to build tension somehow. PERSEUS, JASON, AND THESEUS in particular get horribly beaten up by PERSEPHONE. HADES and ARIADNE are fighting in the middle, and HADES eventually drives ARIADNE to her knees with his Dread Sword of Evil (read: cheap prop from Boswells').

Hades Ha! You're finished, girl. No one can stop me now!

At this crucial point of dramatic tension, enter ODYSSEUS & his crew, led, by the hand if necessary, by DELPHINE.

Delphine Not if we have anything to say about it!

Hades I had to go and say it, didn't I.

Penelope Odysseus!

Odysseus Penelope!

Penelope Where the Hades have you been? And who's this trollop?

Odysseus Oh... ummm... ah....

Delphine I'm not a trollop. I'm the Oracle of Delphi. And that's what we're here for!

Odysseus What, to get horribly slaughtered by that scary looking bloke with the big sword?

Delphine No, to save the day in a flourish of melodrama!

Al (*Stage whisper, to Perry*) What's a melon drama?

Perry Melodrama, not melon drama. It means that our intervention couldn't have been better timed if it had be written that way by some ludicrous hack of a so-called comedy writer.²

Tim And what are we supposed to do about it?

Delphine Well, go and fight. Save Ariadne!

Ariadne Wait a minute! How do you know my name?

Delphine I know many things. Including Hades secret weakness...

Gasp!

Hades What do you mean! I have no secret weakness! I'm invincible.

Delphine That would be true if you hadn't gone for the frolic down by the river Styx with the goddess of love, Aphrodite...

Persephone Frolic in the Styx? I thought you said you were going fishing with Charon...

Charon Hey, don't drag me into this.

Delphine You fell in didn't you. And like Achilles, who was dipped in Styx with one heel sticking out, you were embued with one fatal flaw.

Helen I remember - Achilles could only be killed with a blow to his heel.

Ariadne So we've got to stab Hades in the heel?

Delphine Not quite. Hades fell in face first, with his bottom sticking out...

Penelope Which means that his fatal flaw is...

Delphine That's right! His left buttock!

Helen I'll give it to you, honey, you're one hell of a *deus ex machina*.

Odysseus Is anyone else finding all of this a bit unlikely?

Tim We're about to fight a battle against three deities with the help of numerous mythical heroes. I don't think unlikely comes into it.

² Not even I'm sure I can get away with this line.

Penelope Lost? Didn't I send you with a map? With very specific instructions?

Odysseus Ah, well, yes, I think I must have mislaid that during the war. There were all these battles, you see....

Penelope I even gave a spare one to Tim just in case...

Tim Yeah, the captain came in and burnt that the night we left Ithaca.

Penelope Oh really?

Odysseus Thanks Tim.

Penelope Look, if you were unhappy with me redecorating the palace, you should have just said. Not sodded off for a twenty year sulk...

Odysseus Ummm... it was nothing to do with that. And we did have some cracking adventures along the way. They'd probably make a brilliant epic poem...

Penelope Oh, shut up Oddy. We're going home.

Odysseus ... Yes dear...

Tim, Perry and Al Hooray!

Exit the Ithacans. DIONYSUS has been waking up the unconscious PERSEUS, THESEUS & JASON

Dionysus Up you get, chaps.

Jason What happened?

Dionysus Long story short... we won.

Perseus Oh. Great.

Delphine Come on everyone. To Olympus!

Exit our heroes, with HADES. As the lights go down, CLODIUS, who has been hiding in some very, very discrete part of the stage, goes over to the still unconscious HERCULES.

Scene 10 – A Happy Ending?

ZEUS'S throne room. ATHENA has recovered from her strop, and is back again. ZEUS is on his throne – obvs.

Zeus You know, I keep thinking there was something I was supposed to be keeping an eye on...

Athena Sorry?

Zeus Was there a quest or something going on?

Athena You're kidding, right? The quest?... to the Underworld... To rescue Dionysus.

Zeus Oh yes, that was it...

Athena Holy Hera, you're unbelievable sometimes.

Zeus Well, I'm sorry. Being ruler of the universe is a tough job you know. All these things to keep on top of, prayers to answer etc. And that's before you even get to the paperwork.

Enter ARIADNE, HELEN, PERSEUS, JASON, THESEUS, DIONYSUS, DELPHI & HADES.

Ariadne Hail Zeus. We come with glad tidings. Your rebellious brother Hades has been vanquished.

Zeus Oh splendid. Bring him to me.

HADES is shoved forward

Zeus Now, Hades, you really must stop trying to overthrow me and take over the world. What would mummy think? And frankly, trying to deprive me of alcohol really isn't on.

Hades I'll never stop trying Zeus! I was so close to succeeding this time. I would have gotten away with it if it wasn't... such a stupid plan in the first place.

Zeus Dionysus, can you take him away. He can spend the next few millennia on post-banquet washing up duties.

Hades Nooooooooooooo!

HADES is dragged off by DIONYSUS.

Zeus Now, who do we have to thank for this service?

*ARIADNE steps forward but at that moment... drama... enter
HERCULES & CLODIUS*

Hercules That would be me...

Ariadne What the actual fu...

Perseus (*Very quickly and loudly*) HERCULES!

Hercules Dad, this lot are trying to nick my glory. It was me who defeated Hades. Then this lot came and kidnapped him when I was distracted trying to save an entire village of adorable orphans...

Jason That is complete bollocks...

Zeus Now look, what's going on here?

Hercules Clodius here saw the whole thing. Tell them Clod.

Clodius I did indeed witness the whole affair. And I can tell you, without a shadow of a doubt that (*dramatic pause*)... Ariadne and her friends were the ones responsible. Hercules had nothing to do with it.

Hercules What!

Clodius Sorry, but I can't just stand by and allow the ancient world to continue in its post-truth culture. Enough with the fake news.

Athena I think you better leave Hercules. I think Ariadne has proved herself a better hero than you... in so many ways.

Hercules A better hero than me? Pah. I did 12 near impossible tasks on my own. She practically needed an army. I'm still the greatest.

Helen Hercules, honey. Piss off.

Hercules Alright, alright. I'm going.

Exit HERCULES

Zeus So, it is Ariadne to whom I owe a reward then?

Ariadne Sort of, Lord Zeus. The others had just as much to do with it as I did though. (*To herself*) Maybe Hercules was right... maybe I'm not a

true hero...

Zeus So it's rewards all around? What do we want? How about you all pair off and we all end up on a romantic high note?

Theseus (*Sidling towards Ariadne*) I'm up for that...

Ariadne Shut up Theseus. With all due respect, Zeus, the only reason I'm here at all is because that didn't suit me at all. I'd rather Theseus didn't maroon me on an island for a second time.

Theseus Look, I'm sorry about that!

Zeus Well, if that doesn't suit, how about retirement to a life of luxury on a sundrenched beach?

All our heroes shudder

Jason With respect, Lord Zeus, that's the last thing we want.

Perseus The only reason we went on this quest in first place was to get away from that sort of thing.

Helen And I don't much fancy going back home either.

Zeus Well, what do you want me to do? Create a series of catastrophes so that you lot can live a life of constant adventure? That's absurd

Delphine Hang on... what's been the point of this whole thing if everybody just ends up exactly as they were before? We're distinctly lacking narrative resolution here.

Enter, at high speed, CASSANDRA & PHOEBE

Cassandra Did someone ask for some narrative resolution?

Athena Who are you?

Cassandra We could tell you, but this is far too meta already.

Phoebe *Deus ex machina* bitches!

Cassandra What my slightly swearsy friend is trying to say is, we've got a happy ending for you. You want to give them excitement and adventure? Well, why not set up a team of people whose job it is to protect Greece and go on any quests that need doing? A sort of permanent force.

Zeus A large team of heroes? A sort of super hero-team...

Phoebe Oooh, you could call them the Aven...

Cassandra No you couldn't! Have you met Disney's lawyers?

Athena It might work Zeus. It would save having to find a new hero every time another monster turned up.

Zeus What about it? Are you lot up for that?

**Perseus,
Jason,
Theseus &
Helen** Wohooo!

Zeus I'll take that as a yes.

Delphine I'm sure Apollo wouldn't mind letting me do a bit of freelance prophecy work for you. Count me in.

All Hooray!

Clodius And I could write haikus about you adventures.

All Slightly less enthusiastic hooray.

Athena And I think there's only one choice to be the captain of the group.

Zeus Yes. I agree. Someone go and get Hercules back here.

All Boo!

Zeus What? I was joking. Ariadne of Crete, will you lead the Olympian Questing Squad?

Ariadne Well, we may need to work on the name. But it would be an honour, Zeus. But maybe Hercules was right - maybe I'm not good enough for the job.

Cassandra I wouldn't worry about that. That's what Hercules never realised - that depending on your friends isn't a weakness, and that teamwork is far more admirable than individual glory.

Ariadne In that case, it would be an honour.

Phoebe Tacked on moral lesson - check.

Cassandra I'd say that just about wraps everything up.

Phoebe Yeah, I'd say so. Sorry for trying to derail it.

Cassandra That's alright - just stay away from the gin next time. And I'm sorry for being so pretentious.

Phoebe Chorus hug?

Cassandra Sure, why not?

They embrace

Cassandra Well, look at that. Everyone got a happy ending. Even us.

Enter DIONYSUS

Dionysus Hey guys, Hades is safe and secure, and I've just restocked Olympus' wine cellar. Who's for a massive party?

Phoebe Now that's what I call a happy ending

All *Laugh and ad-lib thigh-slapping*

TEΛΟΣ

Scene Listing by Character

Character	Act 1	Act 2
Cassandra	1, 3, 8, 11, 14	1, 8, 9, 10
Phoebe	1, 3, 8, 11, 14	1, 8, 9, 10
Zeus	2, 14	6, 10
Athena	2, 3, 5, 9, 14	6, 10
Ariadne	3, 5, 9, 14	5, 7, 9, 10
Dionysus	4, 7, 12	3, 10
Perseus	4, 7, 10	4, 9, 10
Jason	4, 7, 10	4, 9, 10
Theseus	4, 7, 10	4, 9, 10
Hercules	4, 9, 14	5, 7, 10
Silenus	5, 9, 14	5, 7
Odysseus	6, 11	1, 9
Tim	6, 11	1, 9
Perry	6, 11	1, 9
Al	6, 11	1, 9
Hades	7, 13	3, 9, 10
Persephone	7, 13	3, 9
Charon	7, 13	3, 7, 9
Delphine	8	1, 9, 10
Helen	8	2, 7, 9, 10
Clodius	9, 14	7, 10
Leonidas	11	4, 7, 9

Stelios	11	4, 7, 9
Mindaros	11	4, 7, 9
Penelope	12	2, 7, 9
Melly	12	2
Antinous	12	2
Ctesippus	12	2
Elatus	12	2

OULES
Oxford University Light Entertainment Society