

## Characters

- Zeus (M)** – king of the gods with a superiority complex
- Hera (F)** – long suffering wife of Zeus
- Poseidon (M)** – (Pos in tag) – brother of Zeus and God of the sea
- Hades (M)** – (Hade in tag) - another brother of Zeus and God of the underworld
- Aphrodite (F)** – (Aph in tag) - goddess of beauty pursued by Hermes and Dionysus
- Dionysus (M)** – (Dion in tag) – God of wine, festivities and theatre
- Hermes (M)** – (Herm in tag) - messenger of the gods
- Chorus (F)** – 1 actor representing Greek chorus (could be split between more actors)
- Psyche (F)** – eccentric female clairvoyant (small role)

## Prologue

(Setting – Mount Olympus. Zeus’s throne in the centre. Characters enter from either side of the stage and create a frozen tableau. ‘Chorus’ enters once everyone is in place, ideally on the floor area in front of the stage)

**Chorus:** Our tale is set in ancient Greece  
A place of art and passion  
Where theatre had its origins  
And togas were in fashion.  
Observe our cast of thespians  
A sorry looking lot  
And me? I act as chorus  
to fill in bits of plot.

In Olympia, there’s a punishment  
To be amongst the Gods decreed  
For Prometheus the Titan  
Who has done a daring deed  
He’s taken the forbidden fire of Gods  
To give to humans as a gift  
And Zeus the highest God of all  
Is really, really miffed.  
**(Though speaking for all women  
I think it’s quite expedient  
That it’s a male accused for once  
Of being disobedient!)**

**Hera:** **(Together)** Here, here!  
**Aph:** **(Together)** Here, here!

**(Everyone exits except for Zeus and Hera)**

## Scene 1

**Chorus:** Scene One is Mount Olympus  
The seat of mighty Zeus  
From where he reigns the god supreme  
And puts his power to use.

**(Lights up of the stage with a tableau of Zeus on his throne stroking a piece of fur like it's cat. 'Chorus' freezes in position of 'opening' gesture)**

**Zeus:** **(To chorus)** Get off!

**(Chorus bows and exits)**

**Zeus:** No one knows what troubles I have. No one knows my pain...

**Hera:** **(entering briskly)** Zeus, have you seen my fur stole?

**Zeus:** **(absent-mindedly)** hmmm?

**Hera:** Ah - there it is! **(takes the fur off Zeus and puts it round her neck)**. What's the matter dear - another stressful day being a patriarchal figure of oppression?

**Zeus:** Hera

**Hera:** What?

**Zeus:** Am I the king of the Gods?

**Hera:** What a silly question – of course you are.

**Zeus:** If that is true – why do my subordinates not hang on my every word, heh?

**Hera:** Sorry, what was that?

**Zeus:** I said, why does no one ever listen to or take my orders seriously?

**Hera:** What d'you mean? Everyone rushes round like a maniac the moment you issue a command for fear of the storm it creates.

**Zeus:** The other gods and goddesses don't.

**Hera:** Why do you say that?

**Zeus:** I ordered them here over half an hour ago and there's no sign of them yet. **(pause)** I may be immortal, but I haven't got all day!

**Hera:** I expect the traffic's a problem.

**Zeus:** What d'you mean?

**Hera:** Well, I heard Pegasus has broken down on the Milky Way, so they've had to put on a replacement chariot service.

**Zeus:** Broken down? He's a flying horse!

**Hera:** Yes, but he's very sensitive since the trauma he went through watching Perseus chop off Medusa's head. He's still got PTSD.

**Zeus:** Anyway - since when did gods and goddesses depend on public transport? They've all got their own transformative ways of getting around.

**Hera:** **(under her breath)** Yes, well you certainly have a transformative way of getting around.

**Zeus:** What does that mean?

**Hera:** Transforming yourself into a swan to sneak out and see your old mistress, Leda

**Zeus:** I don't go to visit Leda. I go there incognito to check on my half-human son.

**Hera:** Which one?

**Zeus:** Pollox

**Hera:** It certainly is!

**(Hermes enters from SL and bows low to Zeus)**

**Zeus:** Ah Hermes. What news about the arrival of the divine council?

**Herm:** I did my best Sir, but your brothers are in the middle of jobs. Hades is just signing in a new sinner, and Poseidon is having trouble with the kraken...

**Hera:** Is that a euphemism?

**Herm:** No, it's a big sea creature

**Hera:** Oh yes – the one with lots of legs

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**Herm:** Tentacles

**Hera:** I bet it can!

**(Hermes looks confused for a moment)**

**Zeus:** **(patronisingly)** Actually, the tentacled Kraken is Norwegian; our Greek version is more whale-like. I blame film directors for the error.

**Hera:** Well, I must admit a giant squid is probably more exciting for the special effects department.

**Herm:** I don't know – Jaws was pretty awesome.

**Hera:** I think that was a shark, not a whale.

**Zeus:** That's enough with the film critique. Where is Aphrodite?

**Herm:** Your daughter, Aphrodite...

**Zeus:** Why do you keep mentioning the familial relationships? I should jolly well know them by now

**Herm:** Yes, your highness, but as part of my contract, I'm obliged to give an exposition.

**Hera:** We don't want any exposing here Hermes! [*Zeus shakes his head*]

**Zeus:** What about Dionysus?

**Herm:** He's just been to Mount Ida

**Hera:** Is *that* a euphemism?

**Zeus:** **(cutting her off)** *no!!* Go back and tell them *all* this is not a polite request - Zeus *demand*s the council's presence *now!* Otherwise, I will be *really* angry **(roll of thunder)** and no one likes me to be angry!

**Herm:** Certainly, Sir...but could I beg a couple of minutes rest first? I've been flying around all over the place: from the sky to the underworld to the sea and back to the sky

**Zeus:** What d'you think I gave you winged shoes for? **(To the audience)** Comes to something when the God of Gods can't get the staff!

**Hera:** Don't overplay it dear, it's not a pantomime.

**Zeus:** **(overplaying the hard-done-by card)** Sometimes, I think my whole life is a pantomime.

**Hera:** Very profound dear. Why don't you go and have a power nap before everyone arrives?

**Zeus:** **(Pathetically)** Yes, I think I need one. All this stress is doing my head in! **(exits dramatically)**

**Hera:** **(to Hermes by way of explanation)** He's been binge watching East Enders! I want you to go back and fetch each of the council members otherwise we'll be up to our ears in another mighty argument between sky, earth and sea, and my nerves just can't take it. I'd rather go through another covid lockdown.

**Herm:** **(Bowing)** Ma'am. **(Hera exits).** With a name like Hermes, I thought I'd end up as something more important than a delivery boy! **(He exits SL crossing over with Chorus)**

**Chorus:** And now we're off to somewhere else  
We haven't been to yet  
**(I have to do this filling in**

**'Coz we haven't got a set!**  
'Tis the palace of the God of wine -  
Here Dionysus reigns;  
The air is full of toxic fumes  
The carpets full of stains!

**(Chorus exits)**

## Scene 2 – Dionysus’s place

**(Dionysus is lying on a chaise longue with an empty urn in one hand, making strange noises. Aphrodite enters from SL carrying a ewer)**

**Aph:** How are you feeling now?

**Dion:** Like my head’s about to explode! Come closer Aphrodite and soothe my tormented brow.

**Aph:** There, there. You know you always feel like this after a night of carousing at Mount Ida’s.

**Dion:** Yes, it’s my great burden!

**Aph:** You really should stay off the grape juice, you know.

**Dion:** How can I? I’m the God of wine and festivities!

**Aph:** You’re also the God of Theatre but I never hear you quoting Sophocles.

**Dion:** Who’s he?

**Aph:** Only our most important and talented playwright!

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**Dion:** Yes, of course I know that. He wrote that lovely play...um...what’s it called?

**Aph:** Oedipus Rex

**Dion:** Yes – hilarious!

**Aph:** It’s a tragedy about a great man who kills his father and marries his mother.

**Dion:** Really?

**Aph:** Accidentally of course.

**Dion:** I should hope so!

**Aph:** It’s so profound and emotive. He can work wonders with an iambic trimeter.

**Dion:** Really? Should I get one?

**Aph:** Oh Dionysus – you really are hopeless. Don’t you know anything about feet?

**Dion:** Well of course I do – I’ve got two of my own!

**Aph:** I mean metrical feet – you know – iambic trimeter creates a rhythm like this - de-dum, de-dum, de-dum

**Dion:** Have you broken down?

**Aph:** I give up – you’re so lacking in culture! I get why Daddy made you the God of wine, but why the god of theatre and festivities too?

**Dion:** No one else wanted the job. They thought it included organising [*local festival*] every year. **(pause)** Of course Zeus would have been inundated with applicants if they’d known it included alcohol in bucket loads. **(Pause)** Which reminds me - do you have any hair of the dog?

**Aph:** No, it’s all mine.

**Dion:** I mean a little drinky-poops for me to help clear this hangover?

**Aph:** Yes, I do. Right here in this ewer. **(Offers him the ewer)**

**Dion:** I’m not drinking from a sewer!

**Aph:** Ewer

**Dion:** No, I’m not!

**Aph:** The pot is a ewer. E.W.E.R

**Dion:** Why didn’t you spell it in the first place instead of allowing the writer to get too much milage out of one pun? **(Taking and gulping from the ewer, then spitting it out)** Turn me to stone Medusa! What is that?

**Aph:** Water

**Dion:** **(aghast)** Water! Have you lost the plot?

**Aph:** It’s not just any old water – it’s from the Fountain of Eternal Youth, gathered when the moon is in the seventh house and Jupiter aligns with Mars. It has powers of rejuvenation and revival.

**Dion:** What does it revive?

**Aph:** Everything, from the top to the bottom.

**Dion:** Say no more **(Gulps it down)** Ooh yes...I think the effects are working on my upper extremities. **(Does some weird moves)**

**Herm:** Ahem.

**Dion:** Hermes – why do you always turn up at the most inconvenient times? Can’t a god have any privacy when he’s having a rejuvenation?

**Herm:** **(Aside to Aphrodite)** What are you doing to Dionysus?

**Aph:** **(Aside to Hermes)** I was just trying to help him to get over his hangover.

**Herm:** Looked like he was trying to get over more than that!

**Aph:** Now Hermy, don't be jealous. You know I only have eyes for you.

**Dion:** Well... What's the message this time? Or is it another flying visit? **(Laughs at his own pun but neither Hermes nor Aphrodite laugh)**

**Herm:** Zeus *demands* your presence at Olympus immediately! Otherwise...

**Aph:** He'll get very angry.

**Dion:** Thunder and lightning.

**Aph:** I think that's the stage direction.

**Dion:** **(Looking sheepish)** Ah!

**Aph:** Oh, Daddy's such an old fusspot!

**Dion:** An old fusspot that can bring down a thousand punishments on our heads. I think we'd better go. Hermes – go forward to say we're on our way.

**Herm:** **(To Dionysus)** Don't be too long. **(To Aphrodite)** And don't forget your promise to me.

**Aph:** Never!

**Dion:** Go on then! Fly off!

**Aph:** Farewell winged messenger!

**Dion:** Will you stop flirting with the delivery man!

**Aph:** Now Dee-dee, don't be jealous. **(Embracing him)** You know I only have eyes for you. **(Winks at audience then they exit)**

**Chorus:** Our scene transforms to another place  
Where two more gods should be,  
One who rules the underworld  
And one who rules the sea.  
And now the aura turns to sour  
And not as we might wish  
Hades is mean and full of angst  
And Poseidon smells of fish.

### Scene 3

**(Outdoors - Hades enters from the left, ringing his hands. Poseidon enters from the right)**

**Hade:** **(Full Shakespearean)** Oh, will these hands ne'er be clean? **(Pause)** This bloody soil - gets right down under the fingernails.

**Pos:** Hey! What's up bruv?

**Hade:** What's up bruv? What sort of language is that?

**Pos:** It's street.

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**Hade:** What?

**Pos:** Street – you know, the language of the youth on the street.

**Hade:** Ah yes – I can see how that would be useful for someone who lives in the sea!

**Pos:** Blinkin' 'eck Hades, you're such a buzzkill. Can't you be less of a face-ache?

**Hade:** No to whatever you said.

**Pos:** I could teach you the lingo if you like.

**Hade:** No thank you. Our great language is one thing I **don't** wish to destroy, unlike you!

**Pos:** Suit yourself. I like to dabble in slang from time to time.

**Hade:** I know, I can smell it from here! **(pause as they walk along on the spot and Poseidon smells his coat while Hades continues to rub his hands)** Ah curses! Why must we always be at the beck and call of that sanctimonious, supercilious brother of ours? I'm the eldest – I am the rightful inheritor of the title of God of Gods – it's outrageously scandalous!

**Pos:** Oh, really Hades – it's your own fault! It was your idea to play Monopoly for the title.

**Hade:** Yes, well I was banking on him losing to my superior game plan.

**Pos:** Not very superior as it turned out seeing as Zeus won.

**Hade:** That's because his dice were loaded.

**Pos:** Are you saying he...*cheated*?

**Hade:** Of course he cheated you numbskull! He always wanted to lord it over us. You know the saying – never trust the middle child.

**Pos:** Is that a saying?

**Hade:** It is now.

**Pos:** Well, I couldn't care less anyway. I like my watery kingdom.

**Hade:** Yes – well you always were wet!

**Pos:** Well, it's better than being God of the underworld in your fiery pits.

**Hade:** I don't know – it has its benefits. The central heating's highly effective!  
**(Pause as they 'walk' along. A 'hedge' passes them and then they stop)**

**Pos:** By the by - did you sort out that chef you were having trouble with?

**Hade:** Oh yes.

**Pos:** What did you do?

**Hade:** I gave him a good roasting.

**Pos:** What was his crime?

**Hade:** Putting pineapple on pizza! An abhorrent abomination!

**Pos:** I don't know – sounds quite tasty.

**Hade:** Yes, but then you like anchovies!

**Pos:** **(offering a bag like sweets)** Want one?

**Hade:** *no!*

**(Pause as they 'walk' along a bit more and the 'hedge' goes past them again)**

**Pos:** I'm sure that's the same hedge we just passed.

**Hade:** How can you tell? They all look alike!

**Pos:** This one has legs.

**Hade:** What is the matter with you today? You're acting very oddly.

**Pos:** You're no Laurence Olivier!

**Hade:** I mean you've been talking in tongues and seeing things that don't exist.

**Pos:** Well, I must admit I haven't been sleeping too well.

**Hade:** Sleep is reserved for those who don't have a guilty conscience.

**Pos:** I haven't got a guilty conscience. I've got a severe medical condition that comes from living in the depths of the sea.

**Hade:** Wrinkly skin?

**Pos:** No - shellshock

**Hade:** That's a stupid joke!

**Pos:** I didn't write this stuff! **(pause)** Who is the latest sinner you admitted to the underworld then?

**Hade:** Agh! One of the worst cases I've had to deal with. An English tourist who defiled my statue in the Temple of Doom

**Pos:** What did he do to it?

**Hade:** He graffitied 'ugly old devil!' across it in red paint.

**Pos:** That's shocking! **(beat)** You're not old.

**(Hades does a double take, then he and Poseidon freeze as the 'Chorus' comes on. After a while they sidle off followed by the hedge and then the Chorus enters)**

#### **Scene 4 - Mount Olympus**

**Chorus:** These gods are due to meet up soon  
And make their judgement on the hapless Titan.  
He'll have no chance to plead his case;  
The gods are only there his wrongs to righten.  
You may well feel this is unfair  
But rulers can be quick to take the hump;  
Their laws are to be followed and obeyed  
Like all with god-complexes – just ask Trump.  
For written in the scrolls of Zeus it says  
That sinners will from happy lives be plucked  
And punishment be swift and really mean  
Which basically means Prometheus is...in trouble.  
For punishment of Gods is fast and cruel  
Though for the underdog we may be rooting,  
Prometheus will face a dreadful fate,  
**(loudly)** Like our writer, who for rhyming crimes needs shooting!

**(Chorus exits. Enter Zeus, Hera and Hermes)**

**Zeus:** That lie down really cleared my head.

**Hera:** Did it? That's good dear.

**Zeus:** Yes - and I've just had an epiphany!

**Hera:** I hope you put the seat down!

**Zeus:** I mean I've realised something really important!

**Hera:** Where you left your keys?

**Zeus:** No...

**Hera:** Because you're always losing them.

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**Zeus:** No, I'm not!

**Hera:** You are! I was waiting an hour last Thursday after Bingo because you couldn't find the key to let me back into the palace.

**Zeus:** That was a temporary memory lapse. I've got a lot on my plate.

**Hera:** Well, it's time you cut down on the carbohydrates. Can I borrow the keys then?

**Zeus:** No, you can't.

**Hera:** You've lost them again, haven't you?

**Zeus:** No...not exactly...I just can't put my hand on them at this moment.

**Hera:** *ah ha!*

**Zeus:** But that's beside the point. Can I get back to my amazing idea?

**Hera:** Oh. Go on then.

**Zeus:** Well, you know that Prometheus stole fire from me.

**Hera:** **(with forced patience)** Yes – you've mentioned it once or twice!

**Zeus:** Well, I have realised that he couldn't have done it without inside help.

**Hera:** What d'you mean?

**Zeus:** It happened the night of Aphrodite's birthday party and the whole family was here.

**Hera:** Are you suggesting one of **us** helped Prometheus?

**Zeus:** Not you dear, obviously. But someone gave him access to the fire.

**Hera:** Like whom?

**Zeus:** My brothers for a start – they're always looking for ways to undermine me.

**Hera:** What do you intend to do?

**Zeus:** I thought a little detective work.

**Hera:** Oh wonderful! I do love a bit of detective work. I'll just get ready **(She exits)**

**Herm:** Do you think that's necessary, Sir? I mean...no one close to you would purposely challenge your authority.

**Zeus:** You misjudge my family Hermes; any one of them is capable of it. They'd all like my power, although none of them would manage all the stress that comes with it.

**Herm:** But, asking them for alibis on the night of Aphrodite's party...

**Zeus:** What's wrong with that?

**Herm:** **(looking flustered)** Well, they might have perfectly good reasons for not being where they should have been or where everyone else thought they should be and where they might have said they were going if they said they were going somewhere where they weren't going and that might make them look guilty even if they weren't...

**Zeus:** Shut up and go and prepare the courtroom. **(He exits)**

**Herm:** Oh dear - I'm in trouble! **(He exits)**

**Chorus:** And so, the company gather, all the while  
Not realising that they're going to be on trial,

But who would dare to defy a god like Zeus?  
This is what we all must now deduce.

## Scene 5

**(Mount Olympus – mocked up courtroom. Zeus sits on his throne with Hermes on his right. They are discussing the charges on a scroll when Aphrodite enters)**

**Aph:** Hello Daddy, hello Hermes. What's all the fuss about?

**Zeus:** Now listen Aphrodite. We've got some profoundly serious business to discuss, so I want you to be on your best behaviour and act with decorum towards me as the head of the family and god of gods.

**Aph:** Oh Dad, really. You do take yourself so seriously! Take a chill pill!

**Zeus:** Aphrodite!

**Aph:** It's all right. I'll be good...ish.

**Dion:** **(Walking in gingerly with his ewer in his hand)** Greetings your majesty!

**Zeus:** Dionysus, you're staggering!

**Dion:** Thank you. You look pretty good yourself.

**Zeus:** I meant, you've been at the alcohol again, haven't you?

**Dion:** No.

**Zeus:** What's that in your hand?

**Dion:** Oh that. It's a special rejuvenating water.

**Zeus:** Water doesn't make you walk like that!

**Dion:** It just hasn't quite reached my feet yet.

**Zeus:** Just sit down and shut up!

**(Dion sits next to Aphro and Hermes makes frantic gestures at him)**

**Dion:** **(to Aphrodite)** What's the matter with Hermes?

**Aph:** Well, you're sitting rather close to me – perhaps he's jealous.

**(Hermes makes frantic gestures again. Dionysus shrugs)**

**Dion:** I don't know what he wants, but he'll do himself an injury in a minute.

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**(Hermes points frantically at Zeus. Dion gestures back that he doesn't get it and Hermes points at Zeus again just as Zeus turns round to him)**

**Zeus:** What the devil is the matter with you? **(Hermes freezes to the spot)**

**Herm:** Apologies, Sir. I seem to have got my old trouble back.

**Zeus:** What old trouble? You've never mentioned it before.

**Dion:** He's only just got it!

**(Hades and Poseidon enter with twigs and leaves in their hair)**

**Zeus:** You're late!

**Pos:** Apologies Zeus. It's all Hades' fault.

**Hade:** **(To Poseidon)** You slimy fish!

**Pos:** We had a fight with a hedge.

**Zeus:** What are you drivelling on about? You can't fight with a hedge.

**Pos:** Want to bet?

**Hade:** I've got the bruises to prove it!

**Pos:** Hades insulted it.

**Hade:** It was following us, so I threatened to prune its privet with my bident.

**Pos:** Turned out it had arms as well as legs!

**Aph:** Arms and legs? Are you sure it isn't a human?

**Pos:** Well, if it is, he's sure living life on the hedge!

**Zeus:** Look, I've summoned you here on a serious matter. Sit down the lot of you! **(sitting on his throne and donning a judge's wig)** First, we must hold a court to agree on my chosen punishment for the clearly guilty Prometheus, who had the absolute gall to steal my fire and give it to the incredibly undeserving humans and needs to have the severest punishment possible for the liberty he took.

**Dion:** No bias there then!

**Aph:** So, what's the plan for Prometheus?

**Dion:** Maybe throwing him into a pit of fire for eternity?

**Hade:** I'd love to take him Zeus, but I've just got no room left. The Underworld is getting somewhat overcrowded. I'm going to have to start deporting sinners to Rwanda soon.

**Pos:** How about something related to water?

**Zeus:** I've already used that one with Tantalus.

**Aph:** What crime did he commit?

**Zeus:** Stole our ambrosia.

**Dion:** And what did you do?

**Zeus:** Sent him to sit near a pool of water by a fruit tree for eternity.

**Dion:** Sounds like a relaxing holiday to me.

**Herm:** Actually, it's pretty grim; he can't reach the tree to eat anything off it and every time he tries to drink from the pool, the water recedes. He's constantly hungry and thirsty.

**Zeus:** Rather clever I thought; a punishment to fit the crime!

**Dion:** Mmmm. Tricky. I suppose you could put him in the freezer for a few weeks to cool his ardour.

**Zeus:** Actually, I have already decided to tie him to a rock and let an eagle peck out his liver.

**Pos:** Well at least it should be quick...

**Zeus:** ...which then grows back every night and so on for eternity.

**Hade:** Not that quick then.

**Pos:** I'm suddenly feeling a bit sick.

**Zeus:** So, let's have a count of hands of all those who agree with the punishment. **(All hands are raised)**

**Dion:** Well, if that's all decided then, it's still early. We could get to the pub for 9.

**Zeus:** I've not finished! I haven't said 'court dismissed' yet! You can't go until I've said, 'court dismissed!' It is my belief that somebody here helped Prometheus take the forbidden fire. **(General denials)** Silence! I have bought you here to smoke out the culprit and make that person pay even more heavily for such familial betrayal.

**Hade:** Don't look at me. **(Zeus does)** Why are you looking at me? I wasn't even here.

**Zeus:** How do you know when it was taken then?

**Hade:** I don't. I just know I wasn't here because I'm always in my underworld domain, trying to keep those wayward sinners in order.

**Zeus:** But Prometheus took the fire the night of Aphrodite's birthday party and that's the night you were *all* here to celebrate.

**Dion:** I don't remember that. Must have over-celebrated.

**Aph:** Of course, you can't think I had anything to do with it, Father.

**Zeus:** Why not?

**Aph:** I'm your daughter!

**Zeus:** In the case of such a heinous crime, no one is above suspicion.

**Aph:** Oh, really Dad, I must protest!

**Zeus:** Why must you?

**Aph:** Why would I want to help Prometheus? He's a Titan.

**Dion:** Really? I always thought he was quite generous.

**Aph:** I mean he's hardly worth *my* attention! I only date gods.

**Hade:** Unless you were plotting with him to take your father's throne?

**Dion:** Now that's a ridiculous supposition, Hades.

**Aph:** Thank you, Dio.

**Pos:** Exactly. I mean, whoever heard of a female ruler? *[the men laugh]*

**Aph:** Oh, really – you're all such neanderthals!

**Zeus:** Well, you've got to admit, they don't have it up here **(points to head)**

**Hera:** **(entering just in time to hear the last bit)** Who doesn't have what up where?

**Zeus:** Nothing dear. **(changing the subject quickly)** Now we're all here – we can start. I wish to know the movements of every one of you during the party.

**Hera:** I shall be conducting the proceedings Zeus.

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**Zeus:** What? Why?

**Hera:** Because... **(dramatic pause)** I have the moustache! **(dons a Poirot style moustache)**

**Zeus:** Ooh – that's having a slightly odd effect on me.

**(Everyone freezes as the chorus comes on)**

**Chorus:** I'll take it from here a mo'  
It's time I appeared again,  
And for something more dramatic  
And a little less inane.

For now, we hear from everyone  
Where they were when the fire was taken.

Is there an obvious culprit here?  
And is someone's alibi a fake 'un?

**Hera:** **(In a bad Belgian accent)** Now the little grey cells do their work, n'est pas? I put it to you all that everyone here had something to gain from Prometheus's disloyalty.

**Aph:** Why?

**Hera:** Because there must be many red herrings to keep the audience guessing.

**Aph:** But, like I said to Daddy, I couldn't care less about taking over the rule of Olympus. I'm much too busy with my romances and affairs.

**Dion:** Oh really?

**Hera:** Has anyone told you that you are shallow?

**Aph:** **(Proudly)** Absolutely. All the time.

**Hera:** And where were you on the night of your birthday?

**Aph:** Here. The centre of male attention all night, as usual.

**Hera:** And you never left the room?

**Aph:** No!

**Hera:** **(forgetting her Poirot act)** What – not at all?

**Aph:** No.

**Hera:** You were here for six hours – surely you needed to visit the bathroom?

**Zeus:** Good point!

**Aph:** Oh yes – obviously I had to check my hair a couple of times.

**Hera:** **(back to Poirot)** How long were you absent?

**Aph:** About half an hour

**Hera:** It takes you half an hour to check your hair?

**Aph:** Seriously, you can't expect me to look this good without time and effort.

**Hera:** I put it to you that you went for an assignation.

**Aph:** Yes, that as well, but I'm too ladylike to mention it.

**Hera:** Let me put it another way – did you meet Prometheus for any reason?

**Aph:** No. I didn't see him in the hallway.

**Hera:** If you didn't see him, how do you know he was in the hallway?

**Zeus:** Good point!

**Aph:** Okay – I did meet him briefly. **(shrugging)** But it was no biggy.

**Dion:** Sorry to hear that – poor chap!

**Aph:** I mean I saw him, hanging around but nothing happened!

**Dion:** Ah – sorry. Wrong end of the stick.

**Zeus:** Why didn't you say something?

**Aph:** He didn't want to converse – he was in a hurry.

**Zeus:** Why didn't you say something to me I mean. He was obviously looking for it.

**Aph:** Well, he certainly didn't get it!

**Zeus:** Didn't you question what he was doing in Olympus?

**Aph:** I didn't really think about it. He's often around here.

**Zeus:** Only when I ask him to be, and I certainly didn't invite him to your party.

**Dion:** But Aphrodite couldn't know that – she's not psychedelic.

**Aph:** **(Irritated)** Psychic.

**Dion:** Bless you!

**Hera:** Did you see anyone else at the same time looking suspicious?

**Aph:** Actually, I did see Poseidon.

**Pos:** Me? What was I doing?

**Hera:** My question precisely.

**Aph:** You were heading towards the garden in a hurry.

**Hera:** Oh really? This is interesting.

**Pos:** Oh yes, I remember – I had the urge to go in the piscina...

**Hera:** In the garden?

**Hade:** Really Poseidon, that's disgusting!

**Aph:** I think he's referring to the fishpond.

**Pos:** Yes, I am.

**Zeus:** I hope you didn't poison my carp!

**Pos:** I only lay down in it to bathe in the water.

**Aph:** Actually. He's telling the truth – I remember him coming in soaking wet afterwards.

**Pos:** See? My element is water, not fire. Can't stand the stuff.

**Hera:** Ah, but I put it to you, that the most appropriate place for you to bathe is the balneae.

**Pos:** I would have done but it was occupied. The door was locked.

**Hera:** Did you hear anyone in there?

**Pos:** As it happens, I'm sure I heard two voices.

**Hera:** Now we get to the truth.

**Zeus:** Was one of them Prometheus?

**Pos:** Definitely not. Sounded more like Dionysus.

**Dion:** Ah, yes. I recall now. I did have a bath.

**Hera:** Alone?

**Dion:** Of course.

**Hera:** Why?

**Dion:** Why what?

**Hera:** Why did you take a bath? You don't like water.

**Dion:** **(Playing for time)** Oh, you know. The...er...usual.

**Hera:** Which is?

**Dion:** Well...I'd rather not say in mixed company.

**Hera:** And who were you talking to?

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**Dion:** Er...myself. I do that a lot you know **(turning his head to the right address an imaginary other him)** You do don't you? **(turning his head to the left as if answering the other him)** I know I do – I just said that.

**Pos:** The second voice was quieter...

**Dion:** I had laryngitis.

**Pos:** ...and higher.

**Dion:** I'd just sat on the loofah.

**Pos:** And didn't sound like Dionysus at all.

**Dion:** Oh, in that case, I was probably... **(trying desperately to think of something)** talking to My...onysus. Yes – Myonysus.

**Hera:** Who's that?

**Dion:** My um...alter-ego.

**Hera:** That is nonsense. I don't believe you.

**Dion:** **(imitating a deep voice with an accent)** Did you hear that Dionysus? She doesn't believe us! **(changing to his own voice)** Absolutely Myonysus. Even though we're conversing now. **(in a deep voice again)** What a shame that the theory of psychoanalysis hasn't been invented yet. **(In his own voice)** Yes indeed...whatever that is.

**Aph:** It must be true Mummy. Dio would never use a polysyllabic word like psychoanalysis so he must have been talking to Myonysus, who must be his much more intelligent side.

**Dion:** Steady on.

**Hera:** But it's the same person!

**Aph:** Theoretically perhaps but not psychologically.

**Herm:** Actually, I have a confession to make.

**Hera:** Ah Ha!

**Herm:** It was me.

**Zeus:** You plotted with Prometheus to steal my fire?

**Herm:** No. It was me in the bathroom with Dionysus.

**Aph:** What were you doing in the bathroom with Dionysus?

**Herm:** Discussing a rather delicate situation.

**Zeus:** What situation?

**Herm:** I can't go into details, but it concerned a menage a trois.

**Zeus:** A what?

**Hera:** A menage a trois – a situation where three people are involved in a relationship.

**Zeus:** Oh. **(Having no clue)** that manage atwah.

**Hera:** Between whom was this – arrangement?

**Dion:** (Coming towards Hermes in panic) Me, Hermes and Myonysus.

**Herm:** What? (pushing him away) Don't make it any worse!

**Hera:** Are you an item?

**Dion:** An item of what?

**Herm:** We're not anything. It's just that we both love with your daughter, Aphrodite.

**Aph:** (Shrugging by way of explanation) I can't decide between them.

**Zeus:** This is all very confusing. What were you and Dionysus and Myonysus doing in the bathroom then? Or don't I want to know?

**Herm:** There is no Myonysus, Sir – it was just me and Dionysus and we were...um...

**Zeus:** Yes?

**Herm:** Throwing dice to see who should eventually get Aphrodite.

**Dion:** And I won!

**Aph:** Oh really – I've never been so insulted!

**Zeus:** Yes, you have.

**Aph:** (Ignoring Zeus) I'm not some pathetic, and exceptionally beautiful, woman you can treat as a prize to be won in a crap game!

**Dion:** Actually, it was quite a good game...

**Aph:** Shut up Dio.

**Dion:** Shutting up!

**Zeus:** There's nothing wrong with games my dear. Winning shows strength of character. I won my throne by playing Monopoly.

**Hade:** (Under his breath) With loaded dice.

**Zeus:** I'd say it's a rather good way to decide an argument, other than just blasting your opponent with a lightning flash of course.

**Aph:** Father, it's highly improper and I refuse to be associated with anyone who treats me like a fool!

**Dion:** Well, if you don't want me, what about Myonysus?

**Aph:** Does he play games?

**Dion:** Never!

**Aph:** Okay. I'm willing to give him a go.

**Zeus:** Now that's sorted, can we return to the issue of Prometheus and my fire?

**Hera:** So – zees are ze alibis so far: Aphrodite briefly saw Prometheus in the hallway but didn't engage with him; Poseidon went to the garden to lie in the fishpond and Dionysus and Hermes were in the bath together playing games.

**Herm:** That's not quite...oh never mind.

**Aph:** What about Hades? He's not been interrogated yet.

**Hade:** Me?

**Herm:** Yes – you definitely left the party on a couple of occasions for an hour each time.

**Hade:** How do you know that? Were you spying on me?

**Herm:** Yes.

**Hade:** Why?

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**Zeus:** I asked him to.

**Hade:** Why?

**Zeus:** I assumed that you'd be up to something.

**Hade:** Why?

**Zeus:** Because you're Hades and that's what you do.

**Hade:** Well, I wasn't.

**Hera:** So, what were you doing?

**Hade:** Nothing.

**Hera:** You did nothing for an hour twice?

**Hade:** Yes.

**Pos:** You need to come clean Hades.

**Hade:** Shut up!

**Zeus:** Come on – admit it. You've always been jealous of me for beating you at everything. Monopoly was the last straw!

**Hade:** I *did not* give any fire to Prometheus. I didn't even see him.

**Hera:** So, what were you doing?

**Hade:** I'd rather not say.

**Dion:** Spit it out for goodness' sake. We'll be here all bloody night!

**Zeus:** And if you don't tell me, I will take that as an admission of guilt.

**Hade:** Okay, okay! I arranged to meet Minos.

**Hera:** Minus what?

**Hade:** Minos – my Head of Operations in the Underworld.

**Hera:** Why?

**Hade:** We've been having some issues in the lower regions.

**Herm:** You can get a cream for that. **(Beat)** So I hear.

**Hera:** What issues?

**Aph:** Oh really - do we have to listen to this?

**Zeus:** **(Enjoying himself at Hades' expense)** Absolutely!

**Hera:** Well?

**Hade:** If you must know – the Doulos were revolting.

**Dion:** You can definitely get a cream for that.

**Hade:** Doulos are slaves you idiot!

**Dion:** Sorry.

**Hade:** We got the heads up from my chief whip.

**All:** Oooh!

**Hade:** Can we stop with the double entendres?

**Hera:** You're the one making suggestive remarks.

**Hade:** I'm not! I'm telling you, much to my chagrin...

**All:** Oooh!

**Hade:** That I needed to sort out my revolting menials after the whip had been ineffective.

**Hera:** Um – that's no better.

**Hade:** I'm the much-feared Lord of the underworld; I'm hardly going to broadcast a servants' rebellion!

**Hera:** What did you do?

**Hade:** I sent a warning back with Minos, threatening a terrible revenge on the lot of them if they didn't stay in line.

**Hera:** And did this work?

**Hade:** Of course. They know that no one double-crosses Hades and gets away with it!

**Zeus:** Ah-ha!

**Hade:** Ah-ha what?

**Zeus:** Did you give the fire to Prometheus in revenge for what you see as a double-cross by me?

**Hade:** No. I just gave you my alibi!

**Zeus:** So, you have no grievances with me?

**Hade:** Put it this way – I'm not playing Monopoly with you again, but otherwise – no.

**Zeus:** Did anyone see Hades having this meeting?

**(All mutter negative adlibs)**

**Hade:** We used your special room for total privacy

**Zeus:** What special room?

**Hade:** The top secret one.

**Zeus:** How do you know about my top secret room?

**Aph:** Oh, really Dad – everyone knows about it!

**Zeus:** No, they don't...Do they?

**(All ad-lib their acquiescence)**

**Zeus:** Yes well, that might be but even if people do know – you couldn't have just walked in because it's always locked.

**Hade:** Well, it wasn't that night.

**Zeus:** Did you see or touch anything you shouldn't?

**Hade:** Look – I just spoke to Minos twice and gave him the message and then returned to the party. That's it!

**Hera:** **(Still in Poirot mode)** So – we are no further ahead than we were before. I, Hera, have not the patience for such dilly-dallying. Soon we arrive at the truth, eh?

**Aph:** How?

**Hera:** I am not a detective for nothing...

**Zeus:** You're not a detective at all!

**Hera:** Shhh! The little grey cells are working 'ard on a foolproof trap...

**(Everyone waits for a long time, occupying themselves in various ways)**

**Hera:** Ah, I have it!

**Dion:** Well don't give it to me!

**Hera:** I ask this of you all... **(Dramatic pause)** You must raise your right hand if you did not give the fire to Prometheus. **(Everyone raises their hand)**

**Zeus:** Well – that was successful!

**Hera:** Indeed, it was more telling than you think. For *one* of you hesitated then raised your left hand! **(everyone looks round and spots Dion with his left hand up – all gasp)**

**Dion:** I'm ambidextrous!

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**Zeus:** Your personal relationship preferences have nothing to do with it!

**Herm:** He means he can use both hands.

**Zeus:** At the same time?

**Hera:** It's a psychological and indeed literary fact that the guilty person always makes a simple error sooner or later. That was your simple error Dionysus!

**Hade:** No error – he's just simple!

**Aph:** Really mummy – Dio doesn't know his left from his right. You can't accuse him of a crime just because he used the wrong hand!

**Dion:** It's true. I just get very confused when I'm in a stressful situation.

**Aph:** Anyway, everyone, including Dio, has an alibi.

**Hade:** Except for **(Pointing at Hera)** *you!*

**Aph:** Don't be ridiculous Uncle; Mummy wouldn't steal anything.

**Hera:** **(Still as Poirot)** Ah! No one is above the Law, and no one is innocent 'til proven guilty!

**Zeus:** **(Getting fed up with the lack of progress)** It's the other way round!

**Hera:** I shall have to ask myself some very searching questions...

**Zeus:** Did you give the fire to Prometheus?

**Hera:** **(As herself)** of course not!

**Zeus:** That's that then. You're innocent.

**Hera:** Oh, thank goodness for that!

**(They all freeze as Chorus comes on)**

**Chorus:** And so, the trial went on and on  
And lasted many hours,  
'Til Zeus called up the clairvoyant Psyche  
To use her psychic powers

**(Psyche enters)**

**Psyche:** Who calls me up from my darkened lair?

**Dion:** This whole psychic thing isn't looking too hopeful!

**Zeus:** Welcome great Psyche. We've called you here because we've got a spot of bother.

**Psyche:** Prometheus has taken fire from you and given it to the humans.

**Aph:** She's good.

**Herm:** Not really – she's read the script, unlike the rest of us!

**Zeus:** I wish to know who gave him access to my fire.

**Psyche:** Take heed Zeus – what is done, once done, cannot be undone and may lead to the undoing of that which should have been left undone.

**Herm:** What does that mean?

**Psyche:** Be careful what you wish for.

**Zeus:** Can we just get on with it?

**Psyche:** Very well. Let us form a circle of truth.

**Dion:** How do we do that?

**Psyche:** Stand in a line. **(All do this and Psyche does some weird actions and accompanying noises to create the 'truth spell')** The secret room door is open...the door to the vault is open...the fire is...gone!

**Zeus:** Yes, yes. We know all this.

**Psyche:** Traitor – reveal yourself!

**(Pause for effect before Zeus steps forward – everyone gasps)**

**Hera:** Zeus?

**Zeus:** What is the meaning of this?

**Psyche:** Sorry great Zeus, but I tried to warn you. The circle of truth never lies.

**Zeus:** This is ridiculous. How can I be a traitor to myself?

**Psyche:** The key to this whole affair lies with you great Zeus

**Hera:** Not another affair for goodness' sake!

**Zeus:** How do you only zone in on *that* word? **(To Psyche)** What do you mean?

**Psyche:** The key to this whole affair is the keys to the secret vault in the secret room wherein the secret strongbox that contains the secret fire is kept.

**Zeus:** Not much of a secret now, is it?

**Psyche:** The keys are gone.

**Zeus:** Are you saying that Prometheus stole my keys as well as the fire? I'll kill him!

**Psyche:** No Zeus. These doors have remained open since the day you lost your keys.

**Hade:** Hold on, hold on! You left the doors open?

**Zeus:** Well...I...

**Hade:** Oh, that's a good one!

**Hera:** I told you – you're always losing your keys.

**Zeus:** I haven't lost them – they're just mislaid.

**Aph:** So, Daddy – *you* gave Prometheus access to the fire – accidentally of course

**Psyche:** Yes, Zeus. This is the truth Psyche sees.

**Zeus:** Well. I...yes...um...I...I think we can wrap this up now. Misunderstanding all sorted out and that.

**Hera:** What are you going to do? I mean technically speaking Prometheus helped himself to the fire rather than stole it and you enabled him.

**Zeus:** Thank you, Hera. I am Zeus and as such I shall behave as all powerful men must.

**Hera:** Which is?

**Zeus:** Deny any involvement and carry on ruling!

**Chorus:** And so, the legend goes that Prometheus stole the fire  
And was the cause of Zeus's dreadful ire.  
And no one ever knew Zeus shared the blame.

Prometheus alone was branded with traitor's name.  
The moral of this tale you must not miss.  
So, if you are confused – it comes to this:  
Take heed how men of power hold on to glory,  
And change the facts so history is indeed *his* story.

**THE END**