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The Birds

A Modern Adaptation

By Don Zolidis

(based on the play by Aristophanes)

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Full-Length Comedy
10-40 actors, gender flexible

Fed up with a world of insurance salesmen and petty problems, two miscreants flee to the kingdom of the birds for a simpler life. While living there, the two scheme up a financial jackpot that could turn the birds' land into a powerful utopia. Their only obstacle: the wrath of the gods. A hilarious and satirical look at politics, religion, and the foolishness of mankind that revives and revamps Aristophanes' classic comedy.

Cast of Characters

PITHETAERUS
EULPIDES
HAWK
EPOPS, king of the birds
PROCNE, his wife, the Nightingale
TITMOUSE
BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIE
HUMMINGBIRD
SEAGULL
PASSENGER PIGEON
DODO
KIWI
PARROT
CROW
BAT
OSTRICH
INVESTMENT BANKER
LAWYER
INSURANCE AGENT
ACTIVIST
INTERNET SPAMMER
IRIS, a minor goddess
PROMETHEUS
POSEIDON
HERCULES
MGRAUCHUCHUK, a barbarian god

(Numerous roles may be double-cast. If more parts are needed, additional chorus birds may be added.)

(A rocky area. PITHETAERUS enters first, followed by EULPIDES, who is struggling. EULPIDES takes a deep breath and sits on a rock.)

EULPIDES

My feet hurt.

(PITHETAERUS turns to stare at him.)

I brought the wrong shoes for this. I should've brought my boots. I don't know what it is, these are just a little snug on my feet, so there's some rubbing. I can't stand the rubbing.

(EULPIDES begins removing his shoes.)

You know, if you had said earlier we were going mountain climbing, I could've brought the proper boots, so really, I lay the blame on you. It's your fault my feet hurt. I have sensitive skin. And issues. Dermatological issues. I mean, did you even think about bringing some sunscreen up here, because I'm going to peel, and then I'll just look like a mummy, you know, just this peeling, ridiculous mound of dry flaky flesh and then I'll never get a girlfriend and then I'll die alone. With my cats.

PITHETAERUS

Eulpides, I'm going to give you two options. You can either put your shoes back on and shut up, or I can stab you.

EULPIDES

Well that's just not very friendly.

PITHETAERUS

Tough.

EULPIDES

I think I want to go home. Yes, I'm going home.

PITHETAERUS

No you're not. We're up here to find the king of the birds—

EULPIDES

There's a king of the birds?

PITHETAERUS

Were you listening at the Oracle?!

EULPIDES

It was dusty in there, I have sinus issues.

PITHETAERUS

He said that the only way to escape the problems of city life was to find the king of the birds. And he would know where the best place on earth was.

EULPIDES

Why are we doing this again?

PITHETAERUS

Do you want me to go through the entire exposition again?

EULPIDES

That would be nice.

PITHETAERUS

Fine. Life sucks. Got me so far?

ELUPIDES

Huh?

PITHETAERUS

Modern life is a pain. I got insurance bills, I got rising health care costs, I got internet spam, I got telemarketers calling me at all hours—

EULPIDES

They're friendly.

PITHETAERUS

I am sick of it. I am so sick of it I could scream. So I did the only thing a sensible person could do: I found the nearest homeless guy claiming to be a prophet from the future, and I had him spread out some sheep intestines in the lobby of the Marriot.

EULPIDES

I think they were goat intestines.

PITHETAERUS

Does it matter? And then I spun him around three times, made him suck on a can of glade for two minutes and asked him what to do. And after he woke up, he said—

EULPIDES

Where are my pants?

PITHETAERUS

Yes, but after that he said, walk to the tallest mountain and find Epops, king of the birds, and he'll know.

EULPIDES

And so you think that was good advice?

PITHETAERUS

I admit, I've had some doubts, but if I've learned anything from our political leaders, it's the importance of seeing through an insane plan to its insane conclusion in the face of factual evidence.

EULPIDES

Well I can't argue with the wisdom of our elected officials.

(HAWK pops up from behind a rock.)

HAWK

Who goes there?!

EULPIDES

What in the hell is that?!! IT'S A TALKING BIRD!!

HAWK

Aaaaaaaaaaaaah!

(HAWK dives back behind its rock.)

EULPIDES

DID YOU SEE THAT THING?!!

HAWK

Go away!

PITHETAERUS

Calm down! Everybody calm down!

EULPIDES

IT WAS A TALKING FREAKING BIRD!!!

PITHETAERUS

Of course it was a talking bird!

EULPIDES

That doesn't freak you out?

PITHETAERUES

It's a conceit of the play, all right! Birds can talk! Just relax.

EULPIDES

Well I wish someone would tell me these things. Can rocks talk too? Hello rock!

PITHETAERUS

No rocks can't talk, don't be stupid. Excuse me. Mister Bird? Can we talk to you for a second?

HAWK *(from behind the rock)*
I'm not converting to your religion.

PITHETAERUS
No, that's not what we're here about—

HAWK *(from behind the rock)*
I don't need a magazine subscription. I don't care that you're poor and trying to get yourself out of poverty, I don't need any new magazines.

PITHETAERUS
My name is Pithetaerus, and an oracle told us to come find the king of the birds.

HAWK *(from behind the rock)*
Which oracle?

PITHETAERUS
A dirty one.

EULPIDES
He had kind eyes. They were a little dazed. You know, from the force-feeding of inhalants. But they were kind.

HAWK *(from behind the rock)*
We don't recognize the legitimacy of that oracle!

PITHETAERUS
What—

HAWK *(from behind the rock)*
We only accept legitimate oracles!

PITHETAERUS
I don't even understand what you're talking about! Can you please come out from behind that rock?
(HAWK finally, tentatively emerges.)

HAWK
All right.

PITHETAERUS
Hey. What's your name?

EULPIDES
Oh, the birds have names now?

HAWK

I am known as Hawk. Because I'm a hawk.

EULPIDES

That's not really a name. That's more like a class.

HAWK

And I am the guardian of the gate.

PITHETAERUS

What gate?

(HAWK turns around.)

HAWK

Aw dang it! Who took the gate!? This isn't funny guys! Fine, I am the guardian of this area of ground here with nothing really in it.

PITHETAERUS

Well, we're here to—

HAWK

This isn't about suburban sprawl is it? Cause I've had just about enough of that. Every time I find a nice place to circle and suck the sweet, sweet blood juice of some little rodents, along come a bunch of you damn humans to lay down some roads, throw up some houses and wreck everything for the rest of us.

PITHETAERUS

Yeah, we don't like that either—

HAWK

I mean, do you have enough strip malls? Seriously? Do you think it's fun to sit on an electric wire all day—it hurts my talons. Okay? You try it. There are enough Home Depots in the world.

PITHETAERUS

We're here to escape all that.

EULPIDES

I like Home Depot.

PITHETAERUS

We have renounced the world of man!

EULPIDES

Where else can you get all those tools at reasonable prices?

PITHETAERUS
And we wish to meet with your king, Epops!

HAWK
Nobody meets with Epops.

EPOPS *(off-stage)*
Who calls for Epops!
(The HAWK dashes off to shush him.)

HAWK
Just shhh! Okay! We're trying to cultivate an aura of mystery!
(HAWK returns.)
He's in a meeting.

EPOPS *(off-stage)*
Tell them I'm in a meeting!

HAWK
Epops is a busy man, I mean bird. He doesn't have time for every straggler who comes up here and wants to talk to him. Unless, you know, she's hot.

PITHETAERUS
I have something shiny.
I *(PITHETAERUS produces something shiny.)*

HAWK
Shiny?

EULPIDES
I have a hot sister.
(EPOPS is there suddenly.)

EPOPS
Who brings something shiny and hot to Epops?

HAWK
Your majesty!
(The HAWK bows.)

EPOPS
Fetch me some popcorn and a bundle of twigs. And a hot chick.

HAWK
Sire, your wife…

EPOPS

All right forget the twigs. Ha ha ha! Just a joke there from Epops to you. But get me that popcorn.

HAWK

As you command, sire.

(The HAWK exits.)

PITHETAERUS

Your majesty, my name is Pithetaerus and this is my companion Eulpides—

EPOPS

Oh it's like that is it? I've heard about you Greeks.

PITHETAERUS

He's just a friend. And we are here—

EULPIDES

Where are your feathers?

EPOPS

You need to shut up.

EULPIDES

I thought birds had feathers.

EPOPS

Epops is molting, got it? It happens. Deal with it. Epops doesn't look at you and comment about all the horrible things about your appearance.

PITHETAERUS

Your majesty. We come with a humble request.

EPOPS

Well get on with it already.

PITHETAERUS

What we are coming to ask you—

EPOPS *(interrupting)*

So how is humanity, anyway? Anybody tell you I used to be a human?

EULPIDES

Wow.

PITHETAERUS

Humanity is in bad shape, that's why—

EPOPS *(interrupting)*

Yeah, it was a bright sunny day in early March. I was in sitting by a stream, as I was wont to do in those days, and I saw the foxiest little filly this side of the Antilles—

EULPIDES

A horse?

EPOPS

No, I'm using that as a figure of speech. Anyway, her name was… I don't know, I'm forgetting her name—not important. What is important is that we made sweet, sweet love by that stream. The water was crisp on our ankles. Butterflies flew by and made faces at us and then went on their merry way doing those things that butterflies do. We had a pretty good day of it. Course then my wife found out. Gentlemen, if you ever have the opportunity to marry a girl that is a close personal friend of Apollo, I would advise against it. Needless to say, I'm now a gigantic bird. What the hey.

EULPIDES

Cool.

PITHETAERUS

But why did He make you king of the birds? Shouldn't you be like a servant bird of something if she really wanted to get at you?

EPOPS

The gods work in mysterious ways when they curse you for eternity. But you learn and move on, you know? I developed a taste for corn mulch, learned how to regurgitate worms into my youngling's mouths and I can poop on people from above. Like I always say, life hands you lemons, poop on people from above.

(A shrill, horrific voice is heard off-stage.)

PROCNE *(off-stage)*

Who are you talking to out there?!

EPOPS *(shouting off)*

Just some humans!

PROCNE *(off-stage)*

They better not be attractive!

EPOPS *(shouting off)*

They aren't!

(He turns back to them.)

But here's the kicker. Not only did Apollo turn me into a bird, for some stupid reason he also—

Skipping Forward

Uh huh, uh huh, that's good. And Procne, how do you feel about Epops?
(PROCNE punches EPOPS in the stomach.)
Good. I think we've made some progress.

PITHETAERUS
Speaking of which, can we just tell you why we're here?

PROCNE
Yes, as soon as Epops is done washing my feet for the rest of eternity.

EPOPS
Why are you here?

PITHETAERUS
You're a bird—

PROCNE
Don't remind me!

PITHETAERUS
So you've seen a lot of the earth. And what we were wondering is: Is there any place on earth better than Athens?

EPOPS
Better than Athens?

EULPIDES
Yeah, cause Athens sucks.

PITHETAERUS
We're just tired of the modern world. There's too much traffic, there's too much pollution—

EULPIDES
You can't get a decent burger anywhere.

PITHETAERUS
So please, where on earth is there a better life than here?

EPOPS
Canada.

PITHETAERUS
What?!

EPOPS

I like Canada. What am I gonna say? They have universal health care.

EULPIDES

That would be nice. I have some serious medical issues.

PITHETAERUS

Any specific spot in Canada, or just—

EPOPS

I'm just kidding ya! Canada sucks!

PITHETAERUS

I was gonna say.

EPOPS

Nah, I think you guys are outta luck. One place is pretty much just as bad as another. Anywhere you go you got humans messing it up. You're pretty much resigned to life of squalor and suffering. And every once in a while someone's gonna give you a free credit card and you're going to accidentally charge a whole bunch of stuff you don't need and you'll find out all of a sudden that there's a twenty percent interest rate on it and you're gonna be paying that off for the rest of your life. And you think, maybe I can declare bankruptcy, but whoops, too late, the credit card companies used all the money you sent them to buy influence in Congress and change the bankruptcy laws so that even if you die your children will be paying off your foolhardy credit card purchases for the rest of time. So yeah that's what you got to look forward to.

PROCNE

Could be worse. You could BE A BIRD!

PITHETAERUS

Dang it!

EULPIDES

Well maybe we can have a form of representative government and we can elect decent people to office who will make laws to benefit citizens instead of extremely wealthy corporations.

(Pause. EPOPS laughs.)

EPOPS

Yeah that's gonna happen.

PROCNE

Might as well shoot yourself now.

EPOPS

You could get married. That's a never-ending fountain of happiness.

PROCNE

I'm sorry, was that supposed to be clever?

EPOPS

No dear I'm never clever. Hey that rhymes.

PROCNE

Cause maybe marriage would have been an unending fountain of happiness if you weren't out diddling our neighbor's baby-sitter! Huh? Now it's a never-ending fountain of BEING A BIRD!

EPOPS

I didn't talk to Apollo.

PROCNE

That's right, blame the messenger God.

EPOPS

That's Hermes, dear.

PROCNE

Don't correct me.

PITHETAERUS

I've got an idea!

PROCNE

Does yours involve kicking him in his privates? But I don't even know where they are any more! Where are they, Epops! We're birds! I don't even know how we procreate! I just got a bunch of feathers all over the place!

PITHETAERUS

Listen, maybe utopia isn't possible for mankind. But…

EULPIDES

Ooh! I know where you're going with this! We live off the grid in a commune and become vegetarians using clean, renewable sources of energy!

PITHETAERUS

You know, that's just stupid. No, what was I going to say is that if man can't make a perfect world, then maybe the birds can.

EPOPS

I'm not following you.

PITHETAERUS

You're king of the birds, right?

PROCNE

Yeah, but I'm king of him.

PITHETAERUS

Well, okay, the two of you together. You command your birds to build a city. And then we can all live in the happy bird city.

EPOPS

Happy bird city, huh? I like the sound of that.

EULPIDES

How do we build a city in the air?

PITHETAERUS

Shut up. But then… and this is the best part of the plan—your city will be directly in-between Olympus and earth, right? So… you become the middle-man.

EPOPS

I don't know where you're going with this.

PITHETAERUS

Have you ever bought anything?

EPOPS

Not recently. I'm a giant bird.

PROCNE

You bought that slave girl once. I shoulda never let you get that slave girl.

EPOPS

Oh yeah. Darla.

PROCNE

Stop thinking about her.

PITHETAERUS

Anyway, whenever you buy something, the person who makes it lives in China and they don't make any money. And you have to pay a really high price for it. The person in the middle makes all the money. It's called capitalism. So here's what I'm thinking. The humans offer sacrifices to the gods—it could be anything really, a goat, a lamb, a kid named Isaac—and the gods eat the smoke from those sacrifices to sustain themselves. So what if you charged the gods for using your airspace to get the smoke? And what if you charged the humans for sending up smoke? You'd make a killing!

EPOPS

So it's like a toll road situation?

PITHETAERUS

Exactly! And if they don't pay the toll—

EPOPS

No more smoke?

PITHETAERUS

Bingo.

EULPIDES

This is the best plan I've ever heard.

PROCNE

And you know, if you were rich—

EPOPS

Then I can cheat all I want and you won't even notice cause you'll be out buying stuff!

PROCNE

No! I mean I might forgive you just a little bit if you had a lot more money.

EPOPS

Can I have that personal assistant I've always wanted?

PROCNE

Not a chance.

EPOPS

Darn.

PITHETAERUS

But the birds will hold all the power. The gods will cave in a minute.

EPOPS

What if they just sort of obliterate us with lightning bolts?

PITHETAERUS

What are the chances of that happening?

EPOPS

You make an interesting point. All right, humans. I like your idea. We will indeed build a wall between Olympus and Earth. And you will be honorary birds.

EULPIDES

Ooh. Can I be a blue jay?

EPOPS

No. You are a cormorant.

EULPIDES

What's that?

EPOPS

I don't know. Some kind of bird. I'm new here.

PITHETAERUS

And I'll be a robin?

EPOPS

Sure, whatever. Okay! Oh, when my subjects arrive just give me a lot of respect, all right? I'm still trying to win them over. At first I tried sort of a friendly democratic approach, but lately I've decided that if you want to get anything accomplished as a leader, you have to transform yourself into a fascist dictator willing to execute random people for the slightest offences. So far it's been awesome. So just go with me.

(He claps his hands together.)

Birds! Get out here!

(From all areas of the stage the chorus of birds appears. Each bird should be completely different, some hop, some swoop, some glide, all are dressed in outlandish and ridiculous clothing. Arriving on stage are the HAWK, the PIGEON, the BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIE, the TITMOUSE, the OSTRICH, the DODO, the PASSENGER PIGEON, the BAT, the HUMMINGBIRD, the CROW, the SEAGULL, the PARROT, and the KIWI. These are certainly not all of the birds possible, and directors should feel free to add or subtract chorus birds as necessary.)

(There is a general excitable squawking.)

HAWK

What is it oh supreme leader?

BAT

Man I hate getting up in the daytime!

HUMMINGBIRD

Whatisitwhatisitwhatisit? Oohlookarock! Heydideverybodyseetherockoverhere? It'sreallycoolandblueandIwishIhadarockformynestathome!

SEAGULL *(to BAT)*

Listen, if you weren't nocturnal you wouldn't have this problem.

CROW

Rawp! That's a good one! You aren't even a bird!

BAT

Hey man that's racist! I can be a bird if I want!

CROW

Bats aren't birds! I say we kill him!

SEAGULL

Chill out, crow. Here's a marble.

CROW

Ooh, shiny.

HUMMINGBIRD

HeycanIsee? HeycanIsee? HeycanIsee?

(The TITMOUSE, a particularly burly bird, approaches EULPIDES and PITHETAERUS.)

TITMOUSE

Who are youse?

PITHETAERUS

My name's Pithetaerus and this is—

(EULPIDES is enamored with the parrot.)

EULPIDES

Pretty bird.

PARROT

Bite your finger!

TITMOUSE

My name's Titmouse and this here's—

(PITHETAERUS snickers.)

You got a problem with that?

PITHETAERUS

Nope. Titmouse.

(He stifles another laugh.)

TITMOUSE

My father was Titmouse senior and I'm titmouse junior. I come from a long line of titmice. You think that's funny?

PITHETAERUS

No, why would I make fun of your name?

TITMOUSE

Some people think it's a little effeminate.

PITHETAERUS

Titmouse? I don't see how they think that would be effeminate.

(The BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIE approaches.)

TITMOUSE

We got a joker here. Isn't that right, Blue-Footed Boobie?

PITHETAERUS

Your name is Blue-Footed Boobie?

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIE

Go ahead. Make your jokes. I've heard `em.

PITHETAERUS

So you're Boobie and Titmouse, huh?

TITMOUSE

We're a pair.

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIE

We're bosom buddies.

PITHEATERUS

It's good to have friends. Personally, I like boobies.

TITMOUSE

Some of my best friends are boobies.

HAWK

Everyone! Can I have your attention please! We have been invaded by humans!

(Squawking and hubbub from the birds.)

They are here to kill us all!

PASSENGER PIGEON

There's no way they could kill us all.

DODO

That's right, Passenger Pigeon. I see a bright future for us.

HAWK

Shut up, Dodo!

DODO

Der.

PARROT

Shut up Dodo!

(BAT raises his hand.)

PITHETAERUS *(to EPOPS)*

Aren't you going to say anything to them?

EPOPS

I find I'm a better leader if I allow my followers to work themselves into a bloody frenzy all by themselves.

PITHETAERUS

But um—

PROCNE

Oh get off your lazy butt and say something to them. Do we still have butts? Can someone tell me if birds have butts?

EPOPS

All right! Silence!

(The Birds quiet down.)

All hail Lord Epops!

(no one does anything. EPOPS turns to PITHETAERUS.)

I'm still working on that one.

PITHETAERUS

Perhaps it would be more impressive if someone else said it.

EPOPS

Oh.

(He looks at PROCNE.)

PROCNE

I know you don't think that I'm gonna say that you giant half-feathered cheating son of a—

EPOPS *(cutting her off)*

All hail Lord Epops! Now, your master will take petitions from the commoners!

(The BAT raises his hand.)

BAT

I would like to petition the king to include night birds in the definition of bird please.

SEAGULL *(coughing into his wing)*

Mammal!

CROW

I say we kill the mammals!

EPOPS

Crow, your murderous taste for blood will be sated soon enough. We just have to find the right racial enemy.

CROW

Could I suggest bats, sire?

BAT

You just hate me cause I'm blacker than you.

CROW

No one's blacker than me. I'm a freakin' crow. What do you have on your chest? That's fur. No self-respecting bird has fur.

KIWI

Oi! I have fur!

CROW

No one's talking to you, Kiwi.

KIWI

I would like an amendment for equal roights for floightless berds! Who's with me!?

(OSTRICH looks around.)

OSTRICH

I don't know nothing.

(The OSTRICH puts its head down.)

DODO

Der. I'm a dodo bird.

PARROT

I'm a dodo bird!

KIWI

Skipping Forward

CROW

I want his shoulders!

TITMOUSE

No I get those!

THE BIRDS

There's good meat right here and more on your thighs
We can't wait to cook you and peck out your eyes!
We'll grill you and baste you and stuff you with corn,
Next we'll fry up your babies before they are born!

PARROT

Rrap! Babies!

DODO

Der!

(The BIRDS pull at PITHETAERUS and EULPIDIES, dragging them to opposite sides of the stage.)

EPOPS

STOP!!

PARROT

Stop!

DODO

What's going on?

CROW

Nevermore Epops!

EPOPS

These humans are our friends!

THE BIRDS

You've said that before and you'll say that again!
You're in cahoots with these foolhardy men!
We're tired of letting you push us around!
You're not even a bird, you're more like a clown!

PARROT

Clown!

HUMMINGBIRD

Isaywedon'tlistentoEpopsanymorebecauseheusedtobeahumanandhasdividedloyaltiesand nowhe'sunsinghisinfluencetohelpthemtakeover!

DODO

What? Wait, what's going on?

PROCNE

All right fellow birds, shut up!

TITMOUSE

Nobody tells the Titmouse to shut up—

PROCNE

SHUT UP!

TITMOUSE

Okay.

PROCNE

If anyone of you had a brain—

SEAGULL

Our brains are extra light so we can get airborne.

KIWI

Oi! Not all of us can get airborne!

DODO

Der! I can't.

OSTRICH

We just have hollow brains.

PROCNE

Just shut up and listen.

EPOPS

Thanks, dear.

PROCNE

I don't want to hear "thanks, dear" out of you. You know what I want to hear, "oh, hey, Procne, you're not a bird anymore! And I'm dead cause I cheated on you."

EPOPS

Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned and turned into a nightingale. Now, some of you are forgetting the fact that I am a bloodthirsty dictator willing to kill whoever stands in my way.

CROW

And we love you for that.

EPOPS

So listen!

HAWK

Make your case, humans.

CROW

Then we will eat you. We may eat you first. I can't promise anything. I'm mostly evil and I hate humanity.

PITHETAERUS

Hey, I hate humanity too, I used to work in the government.

EULPIDES

Okay, I'll tell you all about the plan. Does anyone have any allergies we need to know about first?

PITHETAERUS

What did I tell you about talking? Stop it. People of the birds. I mean, birds. We come in peace. We come to you with a get-rich quick scheme.

EULPIDES

And nothing bad could ever come of a get-rich quick scheme.

PITHETEAERUS *(to EULPIDES)*

You know it was funny once. Okay? Not cool any more. Okay, then—

HAWK

Hold on there! We only listen to rhymed couplets!

PITHETAERUS

But you just—

HAWK

Rhymed couplets!

CROW

Or death!

PARROT

Rhymed death!

PITHETAERUS

Okay, so um… we build one big wall

EULPIDES

And the big wall will be a big tall wall

PITHETAERUS

And the wall will be between us and the gods

EULPIDES

And we will build it with a bunch of big ol' rods

PITHETAERUS

Rods?

EULPIDES

Rods.

PARROT

Rods.

PITHETAERUS

And we cut off their supply of sacrificial smoke

EULPIDES

They don't even get one hallucinogenic toke!

PITHETAERUS

And we squeeze them and tease them till they pay our ransom

EULPIDES

Then we'll all be so rich that we'll all be getting some.

PITHETAERUS

Let's keep this clean.

EULPIDES

You mistake what I mean.

PITHETAERUS

Okay, you know what, can I quit rhyming?

EULPIDES

Truth be told, we have terrible timing.

HAWK

All right, fine, explain it in prose. I don't even care any more. You just aren't putting enough effort into your meter anyway. It's all over the place.

CROW

All right, let's kill `em.

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIE

Nah, I wanna hear about the getting' rich part.

HUMMINGBIRD

Letslistentowhattheyhavetosayyoubigboobie!

PITHETAERUS

All right, here goes. We build a kingdom here between Earth and Olympus and we set up a big wall to prevent gods from getting sacrificial smoke from their followers on Earth.

SEAGULL

Why should the gods care if they don't get smoke?

PITHETAERUS

You never took God economics in school, did you?

SEAGULL

I didn't like school much.

PITHETAERUS

Well it works like this. The gods' economy is based on conspicuous consumption. The more stuff you got, the more important of a god you are. So, the bigger the mansion, the larger your SUV, the cooler you are. Just imagine a completely asinine universe in which this is important. Now, in order to fuel their gigantic off-roading vehicles and huge mansions, the gods use sacrificial smoke.

EULPIDES

How do they get smoke in the first place?

PITHETAERUS

Well, they terrify their worshippers on earth with things like plagues and Celine Dion.

DODO

I like Celine Dion.

TITMOUSE

Shut up.

PITHETAERUS

If they don't get smoke, their worshippers suffer through earthquakes and volcanoes and several new versions of that song from Titanic and a lot of them die or kill themselves, so they take animals and kill them instead, and the gods use that smoke to fuel their murderous supernatural powers. It's a perfect system.

EPOPS

Since I've improved on our democracy by taking all authority for myself, I say we do it. That was a great decision, Epops.

PROCNE

Are you thinking out loud again?

EPOPS

What? No.

TITMOUSE

Well who's going to build this wall?

EPOPS

You are!

HAWK

I call management. That means I don't do any work at all.

EPOPS

All right birds, let's get to work!

HAWK

You heard the man, get to work!

PARROT

Get to work!

TITMOUSE

I'm on my fifteen minute break.

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIE

Yeah.

TITMOUSE

Anybody got a sandwich?

(The BIRDS all gather together.)

THE BIRDS

We'll all build this wall so big and so tall
To choke off the gods and make them feel small
There's nothing so fine as to make theirs into ours
And maybe we'll develop some magical powers!

HUMMINGBIRD

I want the lightning!

SEAGULL

And I'll take the seas!

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIE

I'll control thunder!

BAT

And I'll own the trees!

CROW

I'll be the new god of death with powers galore
And I'll reap and I'll mow and I'll wallow in gore!

KIWI

I'll take on the aspect of fair Aphrodite
I'll be sexy and sweet and my butt will be tighty!

TITMOUSE

Man that's weird.

EPOPS

Go birds! To work!

(EPOPS runs through the crowd. The birds scatter instantly and run off various edges of the stage. EPOPS and PROCNE exit with them.)

HUMMINGBIRD

OkayokayallrightallrightI'lldoit!

(HAWK follows them off.)

HAWK *(to the fleeing birds)*

First we're gonna do some team-building exercises.

(HAWK exits.)

(PITHETAERUS and EULPIDES remain on stage.)

EULPIDES

You think this plan's gonna work?

PITHETAERUS

With my brains and my looks, we can't fail.

EULPIDES

I can't wait to be a bird. This may surprise you, but I've always thought I was a little bit of a disaster as a human being. I mean, after my Mom abandoned me and all, and before I started stalking girls who hated me, I was an unpopular child. Little old ladies who passed me on the street would try to toss me in front of moving cars. They'd scream something about doing society a favor and then whoop, there I'd be, right in the middle of traffic, the drivers swerving every which way to avoid denting their hoods on my prone little body. That's mostly what I remember from childhood. That and the hordes of angry rats which used to chase me down alleys. Maybe my luck's gonna change. What do you think?

PITHETAERUS

What? I'm sorry, I don't usually listen to you.

EULPIDES

Oh.

(An INVESTMENT BANKER enters.)

INVESTMENT BANKER

Gentlemen, I heard about the project, and let me tell you, this one's gonna move.

PITHETAERUS

What project?

INVESTMENT BANKER

I understand, let's keep it hush hush. But I think we're in a terrific position to make a lot of money on this thing.

EULPIDES

Actually, I think we're in it more for power.

PITHETAERUS

Wait a minute, how did you even hear about this?

INVESTMENT BANKER

I've got my ear to the ground and I've got spies everywhere. I'm not opposed to birds ruling the universe, as long as its profitable for everyone. Of course, I'm going to have to take the lion's share of the profits here, but I think you'll find that my offer is quite generous.

PITHETAERUS

What are you talking about?

INVESTMENT BANKER

You see, gentlemen, a few years ago I anticipated a hostile takeover by the birds, so I've been buying small pieces of the sky at bottom dollar prices.

(The LAWYER enters.)

LAWYER

Here's his contract. You can go ahead and read it and check the language.

EULPIDES *(reading it)*

Let it be known that party A, hereafter referred to as the Owner, has purchased and retains all rights to an area of sky twelve inches by fourteen inches, extending upward in invisible perpendicular lines from the surface of the earth to heaven. This contract applies in all dealings between mortals, gods, talking animals, animated statues, spirits, titans, and all sentient and non-sentient beings currently existing or existing at some future point in the known universe for all perpetuity.

LAWYER

As you can see, it's iron-clad.

PITHETAERUS

Who are you?

INVESTMENT BANKER

This is my lawyer.

LAWYER

In order to speak with me you'll need to fill out these forms.

(He produces forms.)

EULPIDES

We don't want to speak with you!

LAWYER

I can't hear you without the proper paperwork.

INVESTMENT BANKER

There's no need to get upset here. I'm a businessman, I'd be willing to lease my part of the sky to the birds for a small stake in the proceedings.

PITHETAERUS

What kind of stake?

INVESTMENT BANKER

I don't know—30—40—50—80 percent.

EULPIDES

I think we better do what he says. My Uncle Fred talked to a lawyer once and now he's legally prohibited from coming within one hundred feet of happiness.

INVESTMENT BANKER
What'll it be? Your shareholders are going to demand results.

PITHETEARUS
We don't have shareholders!

INVESTMENT BANKER
You went public five minutes ago.

PITHETAERUS
But we don't even have a company! This is what we left the human lands to avoid!

INVESTMENT BANKER
You don't need a company to make money! You just need a vague internet concept and some third world children to exploit.

LAWYER
Of course, we don't exploit the children, our subsidiary companies do that.

INVESTMENT BANKER
And then we move the profits off-shore to avoid taxes. It's beautiful, what do you say?

EULPIDES
I guess we don't have a choice.

PITHETAERUS
Wait a minute.

INVESTMENT BANKER
Now I am going to want to subsidize this project by taxing stupid people.

LAWYER
I'll start the Powerball game tomorrow. This is for the public good.

PITHETAERUS *(to LAWYER)*
Can't I just pay you more money than him and retain you as my lawyer?

LAWYER
Absolutely.
(PITHETAERUS signs the papers. The LAWYER turns on the INVESTMENT BANKER.)
Eminent domain.

INVESTMENT BANKER

What?

LAWYER

The birds have seized your property through eminent domain. I've written up the form here.

EULPIDES

He's prepared.

INVESTMENT BANKER

They can't do that!

LAWYER

They can and they will and they have and they did. All perfectly legal.

(An INSURANCE AGENT enters.)

INSURANCE AGENT

Excellent building project here. Do you have cloud insurance?

PITHETAERUS

We don't need insurance.

INSURANCE AGENT

Well, that's your choice of course. I'm all for personal choice. Still, I'd hate to see all your efforts destroyed. Have I mentioned that I'm a kind person with a nice smile?

INVESTMENT BANKER

I do actually own a point one percent stake in all cloud activity.

INSURANCE AGENT

If you buy cloud insurance through me, we can have an adjustor here within minutes of cloud activity. Can I ask you a question: Do you love children?

EULPIDES

I do.

PITHETAERUS

No, I hate children.

INVESTMENT BANKER

That's why you need the children to work for you for nothing. It really works out your aggression towards the innocent.

LAWYER

I have that too.

Skipping Forward

LAWYER

If you could just sign here, sign here, sign here, sign here, and initial here, and then sign here again.

PITHETAERUS

Shut up for one minute!

LAWYER

I will be forced to charge you for my minute of silence.

PITHETAERUS

Listen! All of you people are why I left humanity in the first place! You're what's wrong with the world.

INVESTMENT BANKER

You've got it all wrong. What's wrong with the world is poor people.

ACTIVIST

I want to leave humanity too! I want to live with our friends the trees!

INSURANCE AGENT

Of course, if you leave humanity, you're going to need hermit insurance; I have a very reasonable policy here.

INTERNET SPAMMER

Hey Buddy, I understand. I'm an internet spammer, therefore I have no soul and what exists of my heart is a cold, darkened lump of evil in the center of a vast pool of hatred towards soft furry animals and people's privacy. I have an entire wall of mounted baby seal heads at home. Wait, what was I talking about again? Um… you can get rid of unsightly back hair for just pennies a day!

EULPIDES

Ooh. Dibs.

PITHETAERUS

What will it take to get you to leave me alone?!

LAWYER

More than you've got.

(PITHETAERUS looks at EULPIDES.)

EULPIDES

Hey I just got word. The frogs are going to dam up the oceans!

INVESTMENT BANKER

Ooh. I own a small fraction of the oceans!
(he runs off)

LAWYER
They're going to need representation!
(he runs off)

INSURANCE AGENT
They're going to need flood insurance!
(he runs off)

ACTIVIST
Save the beavers!
(she runs off)

INTERNET SPAMMER
Father LeTour glanced sternly at his Vicar! Viagra! Viagra! Hot stocks! Meds! Send money to Nigeria! Aaaaah!
(he runs off)

PITHETAERUS *(to EULPIDES)*
That was the smartest thing you've ever done.

EULPIDES
Do you miss humanity?

PITHETAERUS
What?

EULPIDES
I'm feeling homesick.

PITHETAERUS
It's time to accept the fact that humanity is a doomed species and go one with someone more likely to succeed, all right? Like cockroaches, or in this case, birds.
(The TITMOUSE enters.)

TITMOUSE
How you doin?

EULPIDES
Hi. Titmouse.
(he suppresses a laugh.)

TITMOUSE
How ya doin?

EULPIDES

Great. Titmouse.

(he suppress another laugh.)

TITMOUSE

Yeah that's my name.

EULPIDES

I'm not saying anything. Titmouse.

TITMOUSE

The guys in the back want you to get fitted for your wings, all right? So get back there.

PITHETAERUS

Awesome. I've always felt like I deserved wings.

EULPIDES

Bye.

(he's about to say "Titmouse" again.)

TITMOUSE

Say it again I stab you. Okay?

EULPIDES

Oh.

(EULPIDES and PITHETAERUS leave.)

(KIWI and OSTRICH enter, in the midst of a heated discussion.)

KIWI

Who are the workers? Who are always the workers? The floightless.

(The OSTRICH looks confused.)

OSTRICH

I'm confused.

(The OSTRICH buries its head.)

KIWI

That's roight, Ostrich, bury your head in the sand. But the time will come my friend when the floightless will rise up and overthrow our winged bourgeois masters. Join with me—

TITMOUSE

Hey.

KIWI

Oi.

TITMOUSE

Are you agitating for social change? Cause there are certain elements in bird society that might not take kindly to that.

(The BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIE enters.)

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIE

Yeah. See?

(The OSTRICH looks up.)

OSTRICH

We don't want no trouble. Awk.

(The OSTRICH buries its head again.)

TITMOUSE

Let me tell you what happens to birds who step out of line. Tell `em, Boobie.

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIE

It ain't pretty.

KIWI

You can't intimidate me. I may be small, but I have fur instead of feathers and that makes me special. And a little weird-looking. And my friend Ostrich here—

(OSTRICH has been trying to leave.)

Hey Ostrich!

(OSTRICH stops and puts its head down.)

OSTRICH

Der. I don't know you.

KIWI

You cannot suppress the flioightless proletariat forever. We shall roize—well, we won't roize that far cause we don't have wings, but we'll roize to a mutually acceptable level where we will assert ourselves in the political process.

TITMOUSE

Let me tell you something you little furry mutant, you're gonna do what you're told, or we're gonna break your legs.

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIE

Yeah. Legs.

TITMOUSE

And then we're gonna shave you.

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIE
And make disparaging comments about your appearance. Very disparaging.

TITMOUSE
And you ain't never gonna fly, little bird.

KIWI
Okay, first off, I'm on the ground by choice, all right? I've evolved beyond needing to fly to make myself feel superior to others. I'm all about equality. Second—
(HUMMINGBIRD enters quickly.)

HUMMINGBIRD
Guysguysguysguys! Herecomestheking!

TITMOUSE
Man you gotta slow down, I can't understand a word you say.
(EPOPS enters, accompanied by the rest of the chorus.)

EPOPS
Subjects, your king has arrived! Epops! All hail Epops!
(The assembled birds don't really do much of anything.)
I said all hail Epops!

KIWI
Moight I make a suggestion, sir? We'd respect you more if you didn't talk about yourself using the third person.

TITMOUSE
I can remove him if you want, boss.

EPOPS
The time for the unnecessary killing of my followers has passed.

PASSENGER PIGEON
Woo hoo!

BLUE-FOOTED BOOBIE
I miss those times.

EPOPS
Birds! We stand upon the ledge to a new tomorrow. A tomorrow where birds will rule the universe with an iron fist and we will strike hard and fast against our enemies! A tomorrow where we will no longer be shot at for no reason whatsoever and will have all the French fries we can eat! I assure you, my fellow birds, that the era of the gods is at an end, and the dawn of the bird kingdom is at hand! I give you… Birdville!

PARROT

Death to the infidels!

CROW

We're not saying that yet.

PARROT

Sorry.

(the BAT raises his hand.)

BAT

Um… I hate to quibble, but you want to call our kingdom Birdville?

EPOPS

Yes! Birdville!

(The Birds mutter amongst themselves.)

CROW

Seems kinda lame.

EPOPS

No matter. Too long have we birds suffered under the heel of the gods, listening to their late-night carousing and reveling and never being invited to join in. Too long have our friends roasted on spits and been shot out of the air by the jealous humans below! Now is our time! Fly my children! Fly! Fly to victory! Yes! We rock! Yes! The end is near! Birdville forever!

PARROT

Death to the infidels!

CROW

Just wait on it. Shhh…

PARROT *(quieter)*

Death to the infidels.

EPOPS

I want to speak a moment about perseverance, because I see it all in you. They said we couldn't do it. They said a group of birds couldn't build an impossibly large wall between earth and heaven in the space of a few days defying all laws of physics and reality. But we pressed on, and through my leadership we were able to ignore reality. And I'd like to think that the best leaders out there are the ones that say, `it doesn't matter what the truth is, just listen to me' and then that leader goes ahead and silences his critics through intimidation or a beheading here and there, and he stakes the heads of his enemies on poles near his house and that's leadership. That's what I have brought to you. I am so

proud of myself. And I think that you're all proud of me too. And if you're not there's a few empty stakes out there looking for heads. Now, fly, my pretties! And if anyone out there spots an attractive human girl, maybe five one, five two, I like `em petite now that I have hollow bones and everything, maybe some frosted blonde hair, go ahead and abduct her and bring her back to me and—

(He realizes the PROCNE is now behind him.)

I mean. Um… no, don't do that.

PROCNE

Excuse me?

EPOPS

What, I wasn't doing anything.

PROCNE

If your eyes so much as spot another human female, I will pull them out of their sockets and wear them for jewelry, do you understand me?

EPOPS

Yes, dear.

PROCNE

Good. Okay, carry on being emperor.

EPOPS

Thank you, honey. Now, I would like to welcome the two newest members of Birdville—

PASSENGER PIGEON

That name sucks.

EPOPS

Could someone kill the passenger pigeon please?

(TITMOUSE shoots PASSENGER PIGEON.)

Thank you.

PASSENGER PIGEON *(dying)*

My millions of descendents will live on forever… ack.

(he dies.)

EPOPS

As I was saying, meet the two newest members of Birdville—Eulpides and Pithetaerus!

(EULPIDES and PITHETAERUS enter. Each has been equipped with a set of extraordinarily fake-looking wings.)

HAWK

All right, get in line with the rest of the chorus.

BAT

So wait, are they birds or mammals now? Cause I'm really confused.

CROW

They're still mammals, loser, just like you.

BAT

I am a bird.

CROW

Do you nurse your young? Do you? Do you birth them live?

BAT

Sometimes.

CROW

That makes you a mammal!

BAT

Why do you gotta be like that?

PITHETAERUS

Hey, so how do I fly with these things?

HAWK

Just flap your wings, it's not that hard.

KIWI

Wait a minute! It's not that easy!

EULPIDES

I'm allergic to flying, actually.

PITHETAERUS

Oh I think I'm getting this.
I *(he tries to flap his wings.)*

KIWI

Well I never! How is it they just get to come in here and learn how to fly while me and my friends the Dodo and the Ostrich have never been able to fly our entire lives—

DODO

Derp. Dodo.

KIWI

Quiet, you.

HAWK

Maybe you're not that smart!

DODO

Derp.

KIWI

What?

PARROT

Not that smart!

KIWI

Now listen here—

HAWK

Quiet!

EPOPS

Now if you'll regale us with a song of victory, my feathered friends, we'll march on to… victory.

HAWK

You heard the king!

EPOPS

I'm actually emperor now. I crowned myself.

HAWK

Oh. You heard the emperor. Fall in!

(The birds fall into formation.)

You too, newcomers!

PITHETAERUS

Excuse me, I have a lead role, I do not take part in the chorus.

HAWK

Oh. Sorry. Other birds! All together now for the finale!

(The BIRDS sing to the tune of a certain nautical sit-com.)

THE BIRDS

We've come this far, we're birds all right, we're friends of a frosty brew
Our fathers all had feathers, and now our friends do too

We've built the wall, we'll kill the gods, in search of a better view
We've always dreamt of power, and now those dreams are true!
(The HUMMINGBIRD launches into a solo at an incredibly fast rate.)

HUMMINGBIRD *(singing extremely fast)*
There's something wrong I don't know what, it seems like a certainty
Our plan will fail and we will die in sure calamity!
Wait what's going on I can't focus cause I have ADD
I look at all the flowers and now I have to pee.

HAWK

Shut up!

THE BIRDS

So sit right back and hear the birds cause we have a tale for you!
The gods will all have heart attacks cause the foot's on the other shoe
Will we win or will we fail it's hard to see things through
And what will happen to the birds? Find out in act two.

SEAGULL

So um… how long do you figure it'll be before the gods surrender?
(Thunder, lightning. The lights flash. Screams of the damned. Etc… A horrific pounding of noise from above.)

PITHTEATERUS

Eh. Not long.
(Lights fade. End of act one.)

Act Two

(PITHETAERUS and EULPIDES are in much the same position as they were at the beginning of the play. EULPIDES is sitting on a rock.)

PITHETAERUS
I wonder if the gods have yielded to our demands yet.

EULPIDES
What demands are we making again?

PITHETAERUS
Have you forgotten the exposition again?

EULPIDES
No. Yes.

PITHETAERUS
Well forget it. I'm not going into it again.

EULPIDES
Darn. You know Pithetaerus, I'm glad we had this time together, subjecting an entire race of creatures to our desires, breaking the backs of the all-powerful deities.

PITHETAERUS
They're not all-powerful. Don't be ridiculous. They're almost all-powerful, don't you know anything?

EULPIDES
I have a short attention span. Hey look a butterfly.

PITHETAERUS
You're an idiot.

EULPIDES
My brother was an idiot once.

PITHETAERUS
What am I supposed to do with that? What happened to your brother?

EULPIDES
He died.

PITHETAERUS
Why do I talk to you? I'm going to practice flying some more. I just can't seem to get the hang of these wings.

EULPIDES

Oh I flew yesterday. It's easy.

PITHETAERUS

You did not.

EULPIDES

I went out to look at the wall. I flew all the way up there. It was great. The rush of the wings. The screams of the people I almost ran into.

PITHETAERUS

So what do you do with them?

EULPIDES

You flap them.

PITHETAERUS

But isn't there a trick to it?

(PITHETAERUS tries to flap his wings.)

EULPIDES

Try jumping up and down.

(PITHETAERUS jumps up and down.)

PITHETAERUS

It's not working.

EULPIDES

If you're fat it might not work.

PITHETAERUS

I'm not fat.

EULPIDES

Maybe you're just a flightless bird.

PITHETAERUS

That's insane. Why would I want to be a flightless bird?

EULPIDES

I'm sure many flightless birds live full, productive lives. They don't even consider themselves deficient, which of course, they are.

PITHETAERUS

I'm not deficient.

Skipping Forward

Let's go, Titmouse. It stinks like the flightless in here.

TITMOUSE

Yeah.

(They exit.)

PITHETAERUS

Did you see that? Did you see that disrespect?

EULPIDES

Oh yeah. They were totally dissing you. I'd feel terrible if I were you.

PITHETAERUS

You know, I came here to try and make a utopia for the birds and give them ultimate power, and what happens? I get trampled.

EULPIDES

And pooped on.

PITHETAERUS

That only happened once. I'm telling you, when the gods surrender, I'm taking all the power for myself.

EULPIDES

That'll make you feel more complete.

PITHETAERUS

You know what, Eulpides, I've had just about enough of your helpful comments, okay?

EULPIDES

Sorry.

PITHETAERUS

Now if only I had some news of the gods.

(HUMMINGBIRD enters quickly.)

HUMMINGBIRD

GuysguysguysIjustheardsomethingimportantthatIhavetotellyoubutIforgetwhatitisheylook aprettyflower! Ilovеprettyflowersdon'tyouandIlovesheepbutnotinabadway— moreinaheyhow'sitgoingsheepkindawaycausetheyhavelittlebuttoneyesanddarknoses— andtheymakesnortingsoundswhichiscoolifyouthinkaboutitdoyouthinkthere'sagodofsheep?

PITHETAERUS

What?

EULPIDES

Yes. I'm pretty sure there is a god of sheep.

PITHETAERUS

You can understand him?

EULPIDES

Sure. What's the important news?

HUMMINGBIRD

Iforget. Doyouthinktherearefrogsinheaven? IhopesocauseIlovefrogs.

EULPIDES

I enjoy frogs too.

PITHETAERUS

Wait a minute, there's news?

HUMMINGBIRD

That'swhatI'mtryingtotellyou! Whatcolorshirtisthat?

PITHETAERUS

What's the news?!

HUMMINGBIRD

Oh! So I flew up to Olympus to look around, and also because they great pastries there and I love a good pastry, especially if it has boysenberry filling, which I have never actually seen growing in the wild. So I was having a pastry when I heard Zeus, and he was really angry, and he said that he was going to destroy the birds and destroy the wall, and he wanted to send down a whole bunch of lightning bolts, but for some reason the lightning bolts weren't working cause he didn't have any sacrificial smoke. So then he said some bad words and kicked his dog, which I just thought was mean cause the dog didn't do anything to him, and then he yelled at Hera, and then she yelled back and made him wash the dishes, but Zeus didn't want to wash the dishes, so he came up with a different plan to infiltrate Birdville and decided to send a goddess down here to check things out.

PITHETAERUS

A goddess?! Which goddess?

HUMMINGBIRD

He didn't say.

PITHETAERUS

Please be Aphrodite, please be Aphrodite, please be Aphrodite…

EULPIDES

She's kind of a tramp.

PITHETAERUS

I know. I can't wait to meet her.

HUMMINGBIRD

Actuallyshe'shererightnow!

PITHETAERUS

What?

(PITHETAERUS begins smoothing his hair and fixing his clothes.)

How do I look?

EULPIDES

You have big wings?

HUMMINGBIRD

Igottago!

(HUMMINGBIRD flits off.)

PITHETAERUS

Do you think big wings will impress a goddess?

EULPIDES

No. You're going to have to seduce her with your inner beauty.

PITHETAERUS

Damn.

(Enter IRIS. IRIS wears a rainbow colored undershirt beneath a black trench coat. She looks like a depressed teenager, albeit with a small set of dainty wings taped to her back.)

Whoah.

IRIS

What's up?

PITHETAERUS

My name is Pithetaerus and this is my associate Eulpides, and together we rule Birdville.

EULPIDES

No it's Epops.

PITHETAERUS

Did I say we? I meant me. I rule Birdville. I hope power impresses you.

IRIS

Whatever. Is there like anything to around here?

PITHETAERUS

What?

IRIS

This place is boring and it sucks.

PITHETAERUS

Well um… we're still working on it.

IRIS

Okay, so… Hera sent me down here to figure out what you guys are doing. Whatever. I don't care. It's not like I matter anyway.

PITHETAERUS

I'm sorry, what's your name?

IRIS

Iris. I hate it.

EULPIDES

I think it's a pretty name.

IRIS

Shut up. It's a name for Grandmas.

PITHETAERUS

What are you Goddess of, Iris?

IRIS

Pain. I wish. No I'm just a messenger Goddess. I go back and forth and my symbol is the…

(she can't bring herself to say it.)

EULPIDES

What?

IRIS

Rainbow. I hate rainbows. Like, I was into rainbows like three hundred years ago, you know? And then it's like, I don't like rainbows any more, but they won't let me switch. So I'm stuck with the lame rainbow symbol even though I hate it. I mean, I've painted my whole temple black and everything, but still, we gotta have a freaking rainbow come shining in every time anyone does something. It's so lame.

EULPIDES

I like rainbows.

(she narrows her eyes and glares at him.)

PITHETAERUS

Listen, Iris, you tell Zeus for me—

IRIS

I don't work for Zeus, I work for Hera.

PITHETAERUS

Okay, well, when you go back to Olympus tell Hera to tell Zeus that we are going to cut off all their sacrificial smoke until they surrender all their powers to the birds.

IRIS

You seriously want me to tell her that?

PITHETAERUS

Yeah. That's what's going on here.

EULPIDES

But you can say it nicely if you want.

IRIS

Whatever.

(she starts to leave.)

PITHETAERUS

Hey wait a minute.

IRIS

What?

PITHETAERUS

What are you doing later?

IRIS

Nothing.

PITHETAERUS

You wanna do something?

IRIS

With you?

PITHETAERUS

Yeah.

IRIS

Are you like a bird or a human? I can't figure out what you're supposed to be.

PITHETAERUS

I'm whatever you want me to be, baby.

IRIS

Look, I'm a goddess—

PITHETAERUS

I know. You're a hot goddess. You're the goddess of hotness.

IRIS

I'm not going to date a mortal.

PITHETAERUS

But—

IRIS

I've gone out with a hundred-handed titan before, all right? I'm not going out with you.

EULPIDES

What was it like going out with a guy with a hundred hands?

IRIS

It was kinda like a carwash. And not in a good way. You guys are lame, I'm gonna go write in my journal.

(she takes out her journal and moves to the opposite side of the stage.)a

PITHETAERUS

I'm going to marry that girl, Eulpides.

EULPIDES

Are you sure you want to?

(IRIS writes in her journal as PITHETAERUS, smitten, watches from afar.)

IRIS

Misery. Agony. Life is unending torment. I hate the clothes at the Gap this year. I went over to Apollo's mansion last night—he is so hot—but he doesn't want anything to do with me cause he says I'm too young for him—I'm 347 years old, I don't understand why I gotta be treated like a kid. If he knew the real me I know he'd like me, but he's too busy chasing after Aphrodite, who doesn't even know he exists, and she's just a cow anyway, you shoulda seen the shirt she was wearing yesterday, it was gross, boobs popping out everywhere, like `oh, look at my chest, I'm the goddess of cleavage' I hate her. Bending over all the time. Slut.

I wish I was the goddess of something cool like volcanoes or skateboarding. Maybe then Apollo would like me. I hate my life. It sucks that I'm immortal. I wish everyone else would die. But they can't cause they're immortal too.

I don't even have cool worshippers. My high priest is this dork named Andrew, which is a lame name if you ask me, and he's all, `Iris, Iris, let me worship you' and I'm like, `ewww, get away.' Last night he sacrificed a sheep just to get my attention and I'm like, desperate much? I don't even like sheep. So I cursed him with all these boils all over his face to show I was pissed off and everything, so he sacrificed another sheep. So then I made him go blind and he walked off a cliff which was kind of cool, but then I felt bad about it cause my dad was like, `you're not supposed to kill your priests,' and I was like, `I didn't kill him, I just blinded him and he fell off the cliff on his own. I can't be responsible for that.' But then I felt bad so I went to Hades and I'm like, `can I have my priest back?' And Hades was like okay as long as you give me the souls of the first-born of a dozen of your worshippers, so I'm like, fine, whatever, so now, I got Andrew back. But now he's like horribly disfigured from the fall where all the rocks hit his head on the way down and he still has all the boils and he's still blind, and he's supposed to be my earthly representative, right? And now he thinks I've raised him from the dead, so now he thinks he's gotta sacrifice a whole herd of sheep, and I'm like, enough with the sheep! Except now he can't even find the sheep cause he's just stumbling around in the field, so they're just sitting there laughing and baaing at him as he walks around with all these broken bones cause Hades didn't bother fixing him up at all, you know, so he's got one arm that's like pulverized and it's hanging limp from his shoulder and meanwhile there's like no worshippers at my temple, cause this `tard's there, moaning in pain and drooling all over himself, but he's still got enough sense to say, `Iris! Iris! Iris! I love you, ah! It hurts! The pain! Help me!' blah blah blah blah blah!

So then, just for kicks, Hephaestus curses my priest with immortality. Just to piss me off. So now I can't even kill him.

(Pause.)

PITHETAERUS

I love you.

IRIS

What?

PITHETAERUS

You're everything a woman should be: mean, capricious, and totally smoking hot.

IRIS

Well you could be one of my worshippers if you want. I may have to curse you though. I just do that sometimes.

PITHETAERUS

Would you go out with me if I was the richest man in the universe?

IRIS

I'm more about inner beauty.

PITHETAERUS

Really?

IRIS

Yeah. But um… wait, so how rich are you going to be?

PITHETAERUS

I own the wall that separates the gods from mankind.

EULPIDES

Actually, the birds own it.

PITHETAERUS

No, the birds built it. It was my idea, therefore I own it. Intellectual property. Just like in Hollywood. The person who comes up with the idea owns it forever and no one will take it away from them and make millions of dollars and not pay them anything.

IRIS

Wait, what are you talking about?

PITHETAERUS

The wall.

IRIS

What wall?

PITHETAERUS

That wall!

IRIS

Oh. I was wondering what that was.

PITHETAERUS

So, what do you say?

IRIS

I think you're like Wal-Mart and I'm like Macy's. Okay? So I'll be going.
(She starts to leave.)

PITHETAERUS

You tell the gods they're finished! The birds rule the universe now! And I'm still single!
(But it's too late. She's gone.)

EULPIDES

She seems sweet.

PITHETAERUS

I think it's gonna work out between us.

EULPIDES

Oh sure.

PITHETAERUS

She just needs to respect me a little more.

EULPIDES

Right.

(EPOPS enters.)

EPOPS

Gentlemen! Or rather, former gentlemen!

PITHETAERUS

Our noble leader!

EULPIDES

Epops!

EPOPS

I am here to offer my congratulations to myself. It seems that everything is going swimmingly.

PITHETAERUS

Have the gods surrendered yet?

EPOPS

I don't think so, but I'm sure they will soon. Once we choke off the flow of smoke, they'll be powerless to act. I have to say that this is the best plan ever devised by man or bird. Already, Birdville is all the rage in the human lands. There must be ten thousand people waiting at our gates, waiting to be transformed into birds.

EULPIDES

Really?

EPOPS

We aren't letting them in, though. I'm against illegal immigration. Maybe we could take in a few immigrants that already speak the language and can fly and everything, but once we start letting in people who are poor, our society is just going to collapse. I prefer to keep the poor below us where they belong.

PITHETAERUS

A wise choice.

EPOPS

We will let Canadians in though. I just find them very attractive. They're just like hot northern snow babes, you know? Grrrr.

EULPIDES

How does your wife feel about that?

EPOPS

Well, to be honest, friends, Procne can get a little bit jealous here and there. She has been beheading good-looking women lately, which puts a damper on my prospects. Every time I start flirting with a girl, whoop! Her head is rolling down the street.

PITHETAERUS

Maybe you should just stick to your wife.

EPOPS

Ha! If I've learned anything at all from this experience, it's that I'm not responsible for my own actions.

PROCNE *(off-stage)*

Are you looking at my husband!?

GIRL *(off-stage)*

No, he's a big bird, why would I—aaaaaah!

EPOPS

I really love that woman.

PITHETAERUS

Epops, if I might make a suggestion. Perhaps we ought to be concentrating more on the gods counterattack than on your prospects at getting some tail feathers.

EPOPS

But I only really got into the king business to pick up chicks.

EULPIDES

I thought you got into the king business because you were cursed for picking up chicks.

EPOPS

Well, okay, yeah.

PITHETAERUS

Tell you what, why don't you let me run the day-to-day operation of the empire, and then you'll have more free time to look for action.

EPOPS

I don't know about that. I've really been enjoying the corrupting influence of ultimate power. It's just so refreshing to be able to wake up in the morning and crush the spirits of your followers.

(PROCNE is heard off-stage once again.)

PROCNE *(off-stage)*

Are there any girls out there!!

EPOPS *(calling off)*

No my darling!

PROCNE *(off-stage)*

Cause you know what'll happen to them!

EPOPS *(calling off)*

Yes dear!

PROCNE *(off-stage)*

They won't be so pretty when I'm through!

EPOPS *(calling off)*

I know, sweetums! You have really sharp talons! That's one of the things I love about you.

(he turns his attention back to PITHETAERUS.)

She's a little suspicious these days. I don't know why. I mean, if there's no trust in a relationship, what do you have?

EULPIDES

That's what I keep telling the girls I've been stalking.

PITHETAERUS

Epops, if you don't give me power over the kingdom, I'm going to tell Procne all about your little rendezvous with those young sparrows last night.

EPOPS

I thought they were blue jays.

PITHETAERUS

What'll you say?

EPOPS

Well—

(PROCNE enters, in a rage. She carries a large feather.)

PROCNE

What's this?

EPOPS

Um… a feather?

PROCNE

Whose feather?

EPOPS

It looks kind of like yours, dear.

PROCNE

Do you think I'm stupid? My feathers are pretty and soft. Feel them.

EULPIDES

Ooh, they are soft.

PROCNE

Not you.

EULPIDES

Don't kill me.

PROCNE

This is some kind of bleached out peroxide blonde feather belonging to one of those tart birds that never graduated from high school. And you know where I found it?

EPOPS

I don't know.

PROCNE

In our nest! In our nest you jackass! I built that nest with my own regurgitated saliva and twigs I found on the ground! And I decorated it with bits of string and a few marbles I stole from some mentally slow human children! It's *our* nest! And then you go along and you bring home some strumpet from the streets! You know, when I had Apollo curse you for eternity, I did it because I loved you and I figured it would make you faithful, but nooo… you have to spit on our love! And to think that I laid eggs for you.

EPOPS

Honey, darling, the other girls mean nothing to me.

PITHETAERUS

Procne, I have something I have to tell you. I'm responsible for the feather in your nest.

PROCNE

What?

PITHETAERUS

Her name was Julie. She was the sexiest swan this side of Olympus. You should've seen the plumage on her. Fabulous plumage. She looked at me with her come-hither stare, her gleaming beak shimmering in the moonlight, the faint whiff of wet bread-crumbs in the air. I couldn't help myself. I was an animal. We found the first nest we could. I'm so ashamed.

EULPIDES

I was there too.

(PITHETAERUS looks at EULPIDES with concern.)

It was gorgeous and horrible at the same time, like some brave new kind of ecstasy.

(PITHETAERUS looks horrified.)

You should've heard the squawking. That squawking with haunt my dreams.

PITHETEAERUS

That's funny, Eulpides, I don't remember seeing you there.

EULPIDES

You were so engrossed in her plumage that you didn't notice me. But I saw. Oh how I saw.

PROCNE

You two make me feel kinda sick.

EPOPS

You see, honey? It wasn't me. I would never touch another bird if you were going to find out.

PROCNE

You better not, cause I didn't get turned into a BIRD for ETERNITY to watch you flirt with other girls, got me?

EPOPS

Oh I understand.

PROCNE

And you two. Seriously, get a life.

(She leaves. PITHETAERUS throws something at EULPIDES.)

EPOPS

Thank you.

PITHETAERUS

So I guess I'm in charge now, huh?

EPOPS

I didn't say that.

PITHETAERUS *(calling off)*

Procne! Wait one moment!

EPOPS

Okay, yes, you're in charge.

PITHETAERUS

I want a crown.

EPOPS

Fine.

(EPOPS gives PITHETAERUS his crown.)

But if you do anything too outrageous, I swear I will—

(he sees one of the chorus birds, PARROT, walking by.)

What's up?

PARROT

What's up?

EPOPS *(sexy)*

Pretty bird.

PARROT *(sexy)*

Pretty bird.

(PARROT saunters off with EPOPS close behind.)

PITHETAERUS

Well that was easy.

EULPIDES

Well, we now have achieved ultimate power.

PITHETAERUS

What do you mean, we?

EULPIDES

Um… us together.

PITHETAERUS

Right. About that—not so much. Besides, *I* don't have ultimate power just yet anyway, the gods still haven't surrendered.

(Enter PROMETHEUS, a man, cloaked in shadow and looking suspicious.)

PROMETHEUS

Hey there.

PITHETAERUS

Who are you?

PROMETHEUS

A friend.

PITHETAERUS

I don't have friends.

EULPIDES

Hey.

PITHETAERUS

You're more of a companion.

PROMETHEUS

I'm afraid I cannot reveal my identity for fear that that lightning-slinger in Olympus will find me, chain me to a rock, and set gigantic birds to eat out my liver every morning before it regrows again at night so they can tear me open anew the next morning.

(Pause.)

PITHETAERUS

Still not ringing a bell.

(PROMETHEUS takes out a lighter and flicks it.)

PROMETHEUS

See this?

EULPIDES

Ooh.

PROMETHEUS

Still don't know who I am?

PITHETAERUS

Are you a satyr?

PROMETHEUS

Do I look like I have goat feet?

EULPIDES

Ooh. Icarus.

PROMETHEUS

No! Don't you have any knowledge of mythology?

PITHETAERUS

I slept through eighth grade.

PROMETHEUS

I am the titan that stole fire from the gods to give it to mankind and is being punished for eternity.

(They still don't know. He whispers.)

Prometheus.

EULPIDES *(loudly)*

Oh! Prometheus.

(A rumble of thunder. PROMETHEUS hides behind a rock.)

PROMETHEUS

Crap, he's on to me.

PITHETAERUS

Aren't you a little small to be a titan?

PROMETHEUS

Just because you're a titan doesn't mean you're huge, okay? Some of us are… dainty.

EULPIDES

I wish I was dainty.

PROMETHEUS

It doesn't matter. I'm here to give you aid against the gods.

PITHETAERUS

Why?

PROMETHEUS

Because Zeus has me chained to a giant rock and is sending birds to rip open my stomach and eat my liver every morning. It tends to make one embittered.

EULPIDES

How did you escape?

PROMETHEUS

It was *birds* who were coming to torture me. Once they heard about the rebellion… they let me go. Unfortunately, Zeus' curse was to have me grow a new liver every night, so… so now I've got eight livers. It's getting crowded in there. It kinda sucks hardcore. I kind of miss the release of having one eaten in the mornings. I felt like I was giving back to the community, you know?

EULPIDES

I wish I had eight livers.

PROMETHEUS

No you don't.

PITHETAERUS

How can you help us, Prometheus?

(PROMETHEUS crumples in pain.)

PROMETHEUS

Arrghghr. Nine livers. I'm sorry, what?

PITHETAERUS

How can you help us?

PROMETHEUS

Zeus is beside himself with rage. He's actually created an avatar and put it beside himself so he can be upset twice. He's trying to ready all the gods to make war upon you.

PITHETAERUS

Bring them on! The gods are no match for a bunch of angry birds!

PROMETHEUS

That's what they decided. So instead of attacking they're going to send a group of gods to negotiate. And these aren't just any gods, they're expert negotiator gods, skilled in every art of persuasion and subterfuge. You'll need all of your wits about you, so if you are addicted to any pain killers, you need to stop right now.

EULPIDES

Does Flonase count?

PROMETHEUS

Does it make you drowsy?

EULPIDES

Only when I'm operating heavy machinery.

PROMETHEUS

You'll be fine.

PITHETAEUS

We're not counting on your brains, anyway.

EULPIDES

Good.

PROMETHEUS

Whatever you do, make sure you seal the agreement by obtaining the thunderbolt of Zeus.

PITHETAERUS

How do I get that?

PROMETHEUS

Well, when I stole fire, I just kind of took a torch up to the sun when no one was looking.

EULPIDES

Oh. That makes sense.

PITHETAERUS

Wait a minute, you lit a torch off the sun?

PROMETHEUS

Yeah. Crazy I know. It's like, why didn't anyone think of it before? If I can get fire from the sun, stealing the thunderbolt of Zeus shouldn't be that difficult. Remember: never give up. I'm rooting for you.

PITHETAERUS

Great, maybe you can—

PROMETHEUS

And I'll continue to be rooting for you from a safe distance beyond the blast radius of Zeus' wrath. But hey, you had a nice run of it for a while.

PITHETAERUS

I'm not dead yet.

PROMETHEUS

I know. You're sweet. Gotta run.

(PROMETHEUS darts off-stage, stops in pain.)

Ow my livers!

(he exits.)

EULPIDES

He was a lot less impressive than I imagined him to be.

PITHETAERUS

Yeah. I have an idea.

EULPIDES

Me too! Does yours involve monkeys?

PITHETAERUS

No.

EULPIDES

We don't have the same idea then.

PITHETAERUS

No I have an idea of how to negotiate with the gods.

EULPIDES

And it doesn't involve monkeys?

PITHETAERUS

No!

EULPIDES

Do you want to hear my idea first?

PITHETAERUS

No I don't. This is what I need you to do: First—
(EULPIDES is sulking.)
What?

EULPIDES

It's just you never listen to me.

PITHETAERUS

I listen.

EULPIDES

No, you hear me, you don't listen. There's a difference.

PITHETAERUS

I do listen to you.

EULPIDES

It sure doesn't seem like it.

PITHETAERUS

Okay, what's your idea?

EULPIDES

You'll just say it's stupid.

PITHETAERUS

No I won't. What is it?

EULPIDES

It doesn't matter.

PITHETAERUS

No I want to hear your idea. It's not stupid. I value your friendship, okay?

EULPIDES

It seems like all you care about lately is destroying the gods and achieving ultimate power in the universe.

PITHETAERUS

I care about you too.

EULPIDES

You mean it?

PITHETAEUS

Yes. Please tell me your idea.

EULPIDES

Okay. We capture some monkeys and we shave them and then we put makeup on them to make them look like people, and then we dress them up in our clothes, and then we stab them a lot and kill them and leave them here, so when the gods come down they'll think we're dead. Oh yeah and one of the monkeys will have a moustache.

(Pause.)

PITHETAERUS

That's your idea?

EULPIDES

It's so crazy it just might work.

PITHETAERUS

NO IT WON'T! Because it's the dumbest thing I've ever heard!

(HUMMINGBIRD enters quickly.)

HUMMINGBIRD

Thegodsarehere! Thegodsarehere!

PITHETAERUS

Quick, Eulpides! Get me a fatted calf!

EULPIDES

Oh you think a calf is going to look more like us than a monkey? That's ridiculous.

PITHETAERUS

Just do it!

EULPIDES

Fine.
(He exits.)

PITHETAERUS

Birds! To me!
(SEAGULL enters.)

SEAGULL

I'm sleeping.

PITHETAERUS

Bring the rest of the birds to me!

SEAGULL

Um… no.

PITHETAERUS

What?

SEAGULL

You're not the boss of me.

PITHETAERUS

Yes I am.

SEAGULL

Tough.
(SEAGULL exits.)

PITHETAERUS

You'll pay for this!

HUMMINGBIRD

They'rehere! They'rehere!

PITHETAERUS

Wait! Oh darn.

(Thunder. Lightning. Great bursts of steam erupt from various parts of the stage and the entire theatre appears to be shaking. PITHETAERUS attempts to hide behind HUMMINGBIRD as POSEIDON, HERCULES, and MGRAUCHUCHUK, a barbarian god, stride onto the stage.)

HUMMINGBIRD

Heyletgoletgo!

POSEIDON

Who here is ruler of the renegade birds?

(The HUMMINGBIRD escapes from PITHETAERUS, who is left alone with the gods.)

PITHETAERUS

Um… I guess that would be me.

POSEIDON

You have violated the laws of the universe—

HERCULES *(interrupting)*

I'm really strong! Grrrr!

POSEIDON

What did I tell you about interrupting me?

HERCULES

Check this out!

(HERCULES flexes.)

POSEIDON

Heracles, we all know that you go to the gym a lot.

HERCULES

It's pronounced Hercules.

POSEDION

What? If I'm Poseidon, you're Heracles. If I were Neptune, you'd be Hercules.

HERCULES

I don't get it.

POSEIDON

Fine. Whatever. But you don't have to sit around flexing for us. We're tying to break the mortals' spirits here.

HERCULES

I can break anything!

(He flexes yet again. POSIEDON sighs and turns his attention back to PITHETAERUS.)

POSEIDON *(in a booming voice)*

Foolish mortal worm, do you really think you can subvert the rule of the mighty gods of Olympus?!

HERCULES

Yeah!

(POSEIDON shakes his head, but ignores HERCULES.)

PITHETAERUS

And you are?

POSIEDON

I am Poseidon, ruler of the ocean deep and master of all creatures of water. This is my nephew Hercules, who is very strong—

HERCULES

Yes I am!

POSIEDON

And our uh… friend… Mgrauchuchuk.

PITHETAERUS

What?

MGRAUCHUCHUK

I'm new.

PITHETAERUS

I'm sorry, do you have an appointment?

POSEIDON

What?

PITHETAERUS

The great king Pithetaerus only sees those who have an appointment.

POSEIDON

We need no appointments!

PITHETAERUS

Would you mind waiting in the lobby then? I'll see if he's ready.

POSIEDON

Fine!

HERCULES

I knew we should've called ahead.

POSIEDON

You could've said something.

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Grrrarr.

POSEIDON

Oh speak English, will you?

(They move away from PITHETAERUS and sit.)

HERCULES

Did you think my entrance was good?

POSEIDON

It's getting old, Hercules.

MGRAUCHUCHUK

I'm hungry.

POSEIDON

Look, I'm all for inclusiveness and multiculturalism, okay? And I think it's swell that my brother Zeus is trying to reach out to the barbarian gods and everything, but you need to comport yourself with a little more dignity.

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Grrrar.

POSEIDON

Is that all you have to say? What are you even god of?

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Things.

POSEIDON

You're god of things?

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Small things.

POSEIDON

Oh you are not.

HERCULES

I'm going to do some push-ups while waiting.

(HERCULES begins doing push-ups.)

POSEIDON

What are these clothes that you're wearing? Are these the proper vestments for a god?

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Shut up.

POSEIDON

Nice comeback.

MGRAUCHUCHUK

I'll do what I want.

(Meanwhile, EULPIDES has succeeded in bringing a steak to PITHETAERUS. EULPIDES hands the steak over while PITHETAERUS shoos him off-stage to retrieve a grill. EULPIDES returns presently with a rolling charcoal grill.)

MGRAUCHUCHUK

I want snacks.

POSEIDON

We'll have snacks when we leave.

MGRAUCHUCHUK

I was told there would be snacks! Rrrarrr!

HERCULES

Okay, I'm tired of waiting and working out, I say we go in there and kill everyone.

POSEIDON

We're here on a mission of peace.

HERCULES

What?

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Snacks! Now!

HERCULES

The best way to assure peace is to kill everyone that opposes you. Everyone knows that.

(EULPIDES sets up in front of PITHETAERUS as he begins to grill the steak. EULPIDES rings a little bell.)

EULPIDES

His majesty Pithetaerus will see you now.

POSEIDON

Well it's about time!

(The gods approach PITHETAERUS, who is grilling. POSIEDON once again speaks with a booming voice.)

Who dares to oppose the will of mighty Zeus?!

PITHETAERUS

Is there any more of that marinade?

EULPIDES

I'll check, sir.

(He doesn't have any marinade.)

No.

PITHETAERUS

Can you send crow to steal some from some picnickers?

EULPIDES

At once, your majesty. Crow!

POSEIDON *(booming)*

I'm getting a little peeved here.

HERCULES

Yeah!

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Hey uh, is anyone gonna eat that?

POSEIDON

By Poseidon, I won't be trifled with this way! Mortal, acknowledge us or die!

PITHETAERUS

I'm sorry, what?

(CROW arrives.)

HERCULES

All right, let's kill him.

CROW

Who are we gonna kill?

EULPIDES

You're getting marinade from picnickers.

CROW

Oh come on. Can't I do something more violent?

EULPIDES

You can be as violent as you need to be.

CROW

Ooh.

(CROW flies off happily.)

PITHETAERUS

Gentlemen, please. I do not wish to annoy you. It's just that I don't answer to the word mortal any more. I find it insulting.

POSEIDON

How should we address you, then?

PITHETAERUS

Your majesty will do just fine.

HERCULES

Never!

PITHETAERUS

Fine, I'll see you later than after I enjoy this nice steak. Mmmm…

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Steak?

POSEIDON

It's obviously a ploy.

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Is anyone gonna eat that steak?

PITHETAERUS

Well I was planning on it myself.

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Cause if no one wants it, I could take some.

PITHETAERUS
I'm sorry, the gods have been put on a vegetarian diet.

MGRAUCHUCHUK
Mrrrarggh!

HERCULES
It's okay, I have supplements.

MGRAUCHUCHUK
I'll do anything you want! Please!
(POSEIDON slaps MGRAUCHUCHUK.)

POSEIDON
Get a hold of yourself.

MGRAUCHUCHUK
Urg.

POSEIDON
We are prepared to offer you certain concessions.

PITHETAERUS
I'm sorry I can't hear you without being addressed properly.

POSEIDON
Your majesty.

PITHETAERUS
Thank you.

POSEIDON
Hercules, will you get out the chart please?

HERCULES
Oh. Can I talk to you for a second?

POSEIDON
What?

HERCULES
I didn't do it.

POSEIDON
You were supposed to make the chart.

HERCULES

I know. Um… But I started wrestling this lion, and then I went out drinking to celebrate, and then some stuff happened that I'm not real proud of, and then I woke up with this lion skin on me.

POSEIDON

So there's no chart?

HERCULES

I don't think so.

MGRAUCHUCHUK

The time for carefully prepared charts has passed! Rraagghh!

(MGRAUCHUCUK is about to attack, but HERCULES holds him back.)

POSEIDON

I'm sorry, he's new.

PITHETAERUS

Look, I'm a little busy here preparing this succulent meal for myself and taking in the gentle aromas of meat cooked over an open fire, so if you don't mind—

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Rargghr! Snacks! Now! I want meat!

POSEIDON

Here is our offer: I am willing to provide you with drinking water for the rest of your life.

EULPIDES

Oooh. Water. I'm thirsty.

MGRAUCHUCHUK

I'm thirsty too!

PITHETAERUS

Your offer is water?

POSEIDON

Well that's my sphere of influence.

PITHETAERUS

And what will you provide, Hercules?

HERCULES

Um…

(he turns to POSEIDON)

What am I providing again?

POSEIDON

It was on the chart.

HERCULES

I'm going to give you one coupon for a free hour of Hercules' love.

POSEIDON *(whispering loudly to him)*

Labor!

HERCULES

I mean labor. And a back rub. I have very strong hands.

PITHETAERUS

And you, Muh—whatever your name is?

MGRAUCHUCHUK

I will give you…

POSEIDON

What do you have in your kingdom?

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Um… we just paint our faces blue and dance naked around a fire. That's about as far as we've gotten so far in our society. I will give you some… stuff.

PITHETAERUS

Stuff?

EULPIDES

That sounds interesting.

PITHETAERUS

What kind of stuff?

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Mystery stuff. And beer.

PITHETAERUS

So your offer is water, a back rub, and a beer in exchange for allowing the gods to receive the sacrifices of the whole of mankind?

EULPIDES

We need to think about this.

PITHETAERUS

No we don't! We reject your offer! Go back to Olympus and tell Zeus he's going to have to do better than that!

POSEIDON

You are a shrewd negotiator, Pithetaerus. Very well, what do you desire?

PITHETAERUS

I would like to have the scepter of Zeus along with his thunderbolt.

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Okay.

HERCULES

That sounds reasonable.

POSEIDON

Are you both idiots?!

MGRAUCHUCHUK

Rrarrgh.

POSEIDON

Hercules, do you understand you'd be giving up your birthright?

HERCULES

Oh. Wait. Then I take that back.

PITHETAERUS

Can I ask you a question, Hercules?

POSEIDON

Don't do it.

HERCULES

What?

PITHETAERUS

You're the son of Zeus, correct?

HERCULES

I am.

PITHETAERUS

And Hera is Zeus' wife, yes?

HERCULES

She is.

PITHETAERUS

Who's your mother?

HERCULES

This lady named Alcmene, she was real sweet, even though she was the wife of this general from Thebes who—wait a minute. What are you getting at?

EULPIDES *(coughing into his hand)*

Bastard!

HERCULES

I'm a bastard, aren't I?

PITHETAERUS

Afraid so.

MGRAUCHUCHUK

And I liked you. Hey is anyone gonna eat that steak?

PITHETAERUS

I don't think there will be any inheritance for you, Hercules.

POSEIDON

Don't listen to him. He's trying to get you to think.

PITHETAERUS

You're going to be cast out.

HERCULES

Is this why I never get birthday cards?

PITHETAERUS

I'm afraid so.

End of Excerpt.
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