

# HEART AND SOUL – THE RISE OF PSYCHE

A play in two acts

By Jeff Dunne

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Warning: The content in this play includes abduction, and depicts scenes of significant emotional abuse and manipulation. If these are sensitive subjects for you, please proceed with caution.

**CHARACTERS**  
(In Order of Appearance)

PSYCHE (F Lead)	Psyche is the embodiment of soul, and should be played by a young woman, likely high school-aged (or one who can pass for that age).
PROVIDENCE/SHADE (F Lead, but M possible)	Providence, who is also Shade later in the play, could be played by a man or a woman, although the latter is recommended, as the two personas should be opposite genders in representation. To the extent possible, it should not be obvious that they are the same person.
APHRODITE (F Lead)	Aphrodite is the Goddess of Beauty. She could be a woman any age, but late 20's to mid 30's is suggested.
HEPHAESTUS (M Supporting)	Hephaestus is the God of Technology. He should be played by a man around the same age as, or slightly older than, Aphrodite.
KAITLYN (F Lead)	Kaitlyn is a young woman, high-school aged (at least in appearance).
JACOBS (M/F Supporting)	Jacobs is a school principal. The part could be played by a man or a woman of any "professional" age (typically 30+).
GLADYS (F Supporting)	Gladys is a high school history teacher. She could be played by a woman of any age over 25, though she is envisioned over 40.
ZEUS (M Supporting)	Zeus is the God of the Sky. He should be played by a man in his later years, although younger is possible.
EROS (M Supporting)	Eros, the God of Love, should be played by a youthful-looking man, anywhere in the 20's through mid-30's range.
APOLLO (M Supporting)	Apollo should be played by a man, of almost any adult age (i.e. 21+).

## SETTING

A variety of settings, from ancient Greece to a modern day classroom.

ACT I

Scene 1	A classroom (Modern times)
Scene 2	Aphrodite's chambers in Olympus (Ancient times)
Scene 3	Aphrodite's chambers in Olympus (Ancient times)
Scene 4	Principal's office (Modern times)
Scene 5	Gates of Tartarus, The Underworld (Ancient times)
Scene 6	A park in Olympus (Ancient times)
Scene 7	A cave in the Underworld (Medieval times)

ACT II

Scene 1	A cave in the Underworld (Medieval times)
Scene 2	A bus terminal in Kalamata, Greece (Modern times)
Scene 3	Somewhere in the Underworld (Modern times)
Scene 4	Entrance to the Underworld (Modern times)
Scene 5	Gates of Tartarus, The Underworld (Modern times)
Scene 6	Entrance to the Underworld (Modern times)

ACT I

SCENE 1

*(Gladys, standing center stage facing the audience, has just begun a lecture to the class/audience. Kaitlyn is at the front of the audience.)*

GLADYS

Good morning, class. Today we are going cover the myth of Eros and Psyche. But before we begin, I would start with a short review of the material we covered yesterday. You can use your notes if you have to, but I'd *like* for you to try to answer just from memory. Now, who can tell me about Zeus?

KAITLYN

Zeus is the God of the Sky. He's the son of the Titan Cronus, and father of Apollo, Ares, Athena, and Hephaestus. He married his sister Hera, which is kinda gross if you ask me.

GLADYS

Very good, Kaitlyn, although please remember to raise your hand before answering. Zeus is also the father of Aphrodite, who is the goddess of—

KAITLYN

He's not, actually. I know the textbook says he is, but it's wrong. It's also wrong about—

GLADYS

Kaitlyn, I won't remind you again to raise your hand before you speak. It is true that different sources describe the relationships of the Greek Gods differently, but in this class we are going accept the traditional explanation that Aphrodite is the daughter of Zeus and—

KAITLYN

Even though it's wrong...

GLADYS

Kaitlyn!

KAITLYN

I know, I know. Raise my hand first.

GLADYS

It is also important to remember that Zeus is the ruler of Olympus.

KAITLYN

*(Raising her hand as she says...)*

Was!

GLADYS

Kaitlyn!

KAITLYN

What? I raised my hand.

GLADYS

You need to raise your hand before you speak. Now what about the other Gods. Who can tell me about Hephaestus?

*(Kaitlyn raises her hand. Gladys looks around the audience, hoping to give another student a chance. Eventually...)*

Go ahead, Kaitlyn.

KAITLYN

Hephaestus is the god of crafting, and sometimes called the god of technology. He's married to Aphrodite, which is really kind of stupid, because she's cheating on him with Ares, the god of War.

GLADYS

A little crass, but very good. Okay, then let's begin talking about Eros and Psyche. This is an important myth that describes how Eros, the god of Love, descends into the Underworld and rescues Psyche, who represents Soul.

KAITLYN

That's not what happened at all!

GLADYS

Kaitlyn! You are not to speak without first raising your hand and being called upon.

*(Kaitlyn raises her hand. After an exasperated pause to regain her composure...)*

Yes, Kaitlyn.

KAITLYN

I don't understand.

GLADYS

What don't you understand?

KAITLYN

Before you said that you weren't going to remind me again about raising my hand, but then you just did it again. So are you going to keep reminding me or not?

*(The lights fade during the last line...)*

GLADYS

*(Taking another few calming breaths...)*

Perhaps the most memorable parts of this myth are the four labors that Aphrodite laid upon Psyche as punishment for injuring Eros, labors that she was only able to complete with the aid of Providence...

*(Lights out.)*

ACT I

SCENE 2

*(The stage is set as a chamber of ancient Greece. As the lights come up, Providence – as female – is entering.)*

PSYCHE (OFF)

Providence, you walk too fast. Will you not take pity upon a girl who carries such a heavy burden?

PROVIDENCE

It is your fate to bear this water for the goddess.

PSYCHE

Is she there? Do you see her?

PROVIDENCE

No, child. The room is empty. But she could appear at any moment. Do hurry.

PSYCHE

You could help...

*(Psyche enters the room. She is a young girl, the most beautiful in all the world despite being bedraggled from her trip there and back from the River Styx. She is carrying a jug of water, and is clearly exhausted. She stumbles, and Providence reaches out to help, but stops herself at the last moment.)*

PROVIDENCE

Do be careful, Psyche. Aphrodite will leverage any excuse. She was emphatic that not a single drop be spilt.

PSYCHE

What does she even want with it?

PROVIDENCE

Likely nothing. The goddess of beauty can be... capricious.

PSYCHE

No one knows that better than I, Providence.



PROVIDENCE

I imagine not. And Psyche... I do pity you. If there was more I could do...

PSYCHE

No. Please. It was unfair of me to say otherwise. If it were not for your help, I would already be lost.

PROVIDENCE

Beauty has not been kind to you.

PSYCHE

Never was a truer statement made. And not only in matters of Aphrodite.

PROVIDENCE

It is ironic indeed how your own beauty has been more of a curse than... (*She sees that her words are making Psyche sad.*) Her son loves you. You must realize that.

PSYCHE

Eros loves everyone.

PROVIDENCE

Perhaps. But not with equality.

PSYCHE

Then why did he flee?

PROVIDENCE

Such is the nature of Love. Easily injured, slow to heal, and fickle when betrayal is perceived.

PSYCHE

Betrayal. Yes. I deserved this. I was weak.

PROVIDENCE

Who is to say what is deserved? The expectation laid upon you was severe. I think no one...

PSYCHE

But I agreed. I pledged never to look upon him.

PROVIDENCE

You are unfair to yourself. Could any mortal keep such a vow? Endure a life of such mystery to never see the face of her betrothed?

PSYCHE

I betrayed him. I betrayed myself.

PROVIDENCE

Perhaps. Yet we are but instruments of the gods. It is they who cast our fates. If there was betrayal then—

PSYCHE

Don't... don't say "it was meant to be". I'd not insult Apollo, but I cannot bear the thought that I am nothing more than a golem, some automaton created to act out the script laid before her...

PROVIDENCE

You may not care for the thought, but—

PSYCHE

So you believe that our future is so cast? Written in the stars in a language only Apollo may read?

PROVIDENCE

You would ask this of Providence herself? Apollo's prophecies come to pass. There can be no denying that—

PSYCHE

Apollo speaks riddles!

PROVIDENCE

Hush, child. We stand within Olympus. Your words will travel—

PSYCHE

Let them travel! Better to die here and now than live this... this unlife, carrying out the will of the gods like some marionette that performs for—

PROVIDENCE

Death is not what I fear for you, Psyche.

PSYCHE

I do not fear death either.

PROVIDENCE

That is not what I mean.

PSYCHE

Then what?

PROVIDENCE

We should not talk of such things.

PSYCHE

Please, Providence. I would know what you think.

PROVIDENCE

For you, child, I think death would be a welcome release. A release from the harshness and cruel isolation your beauty has bought you. And for that reason alone, I think Aphrodite would deny it.

PSYCHE

Deny me death? But why—

PROVIDENCE

The gods conceive terrible things for those who shame them. Ask Prometheus. Or Sisyphus.

PSYCHE

But I'm nothing. I did nothing.

PROVIDENCE

You won the heart of the God of Love. That is enough. But when I said that death is not what I fear for you, I meant something different.

PSYCHE

I do not understand.

PROVIDENCE

I fear what your death would herald for all mortals.

PSYCHE

You confuse me with my name, and credit me with an importance I most certainly do not warrant.

PROVIDENCE

Your name was no coincidence, child. Mortal though you may be, you *are* Soul, and I weep at the thought of what this world will become should you die.

PSYCHE

Then weep, sweet Providence. Weep for humanity if you will, for I will die. If not today, then—

PROVIDENCE

No. No more shall we speak of this.

PSYCHE

You, of all people, cannot turn a blind eye to such things. I *am* mortal. I *will* die. It will come to pass.

PROVIDENCE

Eros will not let you die. I have faith in Love.

PSYCHE

I have betrayed him. He will turn his favor to another.

PROVIDENCE

How could another fill his heart once he had yours? And you his...

PSYCHE

He saw my weakness—

PROVIDENCE

In matters such as this, perseverance means more than strength.

PSYCHE

Perseverance.

PROVIDENCE

Yes. Perseverance. To stand and endure against the tides of fate, is that not the essence of Soul? Is that not what you do?

PSYCHE

You would feign cheer me through flattery. But you forget, Providence, that I am not like you. Or the gods. I am mortal. Aphrodite may remain beautiful forever, but not I. And when my beauty fades, where will his attentions turn?

PROVIDENCE

Eros does not find you beautiful for the shape of your face or the curve of your hip.

PSYCHE

There is nothing else to me!

PROVIDENCE

There is everything else! (*Taking a calming breath...*) You simply cannot see it.

PSYCHE

If I cannot see it, then how can it be?

PROVIDENCE

You cannot see it *because* it is you. You think you are prosaic, because you cannot imagine how anyone could live without the spark you possess. But child, nothing could be further from the truth. That spark is everything, and it is rarer than... than... than I don't know what.

PSYCHE

Scarcity does not make value.

PROVIDENCE

You're wrong.

PSYCHE

If I am so valuable, then why do all mortal men shy away?

PROVIDENCE

They do *not* shy away, Psyche. Men flock to you.

PSYCHE

But none would take my hand.

PROVIDENCE

The moth cannot endure the flame, no matter the attraction it holds.

PSYCHE

So this is my destiny. Born with some ephemeral gift that brings nothing but and loneliness and pain. Destined to atone for one moment of weakness in unending servitude to the mother of a husband I am forbidden to see.

PROVIDENCE

We do not know it will be unending, Psyche, nor what your ultimate fate will be. Only Apollo can read those stars, and perhaps not even he.

PSYCHE

It isn't fair.

PROVIDENCE

Fair? What in life is fair? One accepts what is, or strives to change it. Would Zeus have dethroned Cronos if he found life to be fair?

PSYCHE

And yet he is no better than his father. So will the Sky himself be overthrown, castrated, and banished into Tartarus?

PROVIDENCE

I shudder at the thought.

PSYCHE

You fear to live in the absence of his leadership?

PROVIDENCE

Is this world so unbearable to you? Not your present plight, but the world itself.

PSYCHE

No. I suppose it isn't. But why do you ask this?

PROVIDENCE

He who rules in Olympus shapes the world, Psyche. If Zeus were no longer there, who would fill that void? And what kind of world would he cast upon us?

PSYCHE

Perhaps it would be my lord Eros. Imagine a world in the likeness of Love. Would that not be better?

PROVIDENCE

You lament that this world is unfair, yet would see it shaped by something as flighty and untempered as Love?

PSYCHE

I had not thought of that. *(She is suddenly impish, the humor and whimsy of youth flowing forth.)* But if I were by his side...

PROVIDENCE

*(Laughing...)*

Now there is a world I would live to see. A world of love and soul and—

*(Providence is suddenly alert.)*

Aphrodite approaches. Be brave, child. *(Pausing to realize what that might mean.)*  
But not foolish...

PSYCHE

Go.

*(She shoos her out, and Providence exits. Psyche bustles about, preparing for the arrival of the Goddess. Aphrodite enters.)*

APHRODITE

Psyche. The hour has arrived. Have you brought the water as I commanded?

PSYCHE

I have. A full jug, with no drop spilt.

APHRODITE

From the top of the waterfall as I commanded?

*(Psyche nods. Aphrodite looks into the jug.)*

And you did this by yourself?

PSYCHE

I followed your instructions most exactly, Aphrodite.

APHRODITE

I see. The epitome of Aquarius.

PSYCHE

Of... Aquarius? I am afraid I do not understand.

APHRODITE

Aquarius... The Water Bearer.

PSYCHE

Oh, I did not—

APHRODITE

Such a witless child. I simply cannot understand what my son saw in you.

PSYCHE

In the matter of your son, how does he fare?

APHRODITE

He is still very weak from the injury you caused him. I must tend him constantly as a result of your foolishness and weakness.

PSYCHE

Perhaps Hermes would know of—

APHRODITE

I know best how to care for Eros. These things take time, however – time that I can no longer dedicate to my own affairs.

PSYCHE

I could help tend to him. I could—

APHRODITE

I would not trust you anywhere near my son, lacking in wit and wisdom as you are. No, instead you will attend other matters for me.

PSYCHE

I...

APHRODITE

You do wish to help, do you not?

PSYCHE

Of course.

APHRODITE

Good. Then you will undertake another task for me. And for you, to help atone in part for the damage you have done.

PSYCHE

Another task?

APHRODITE

Yes. Another task. Really, Psyche, you are fortunate that I am so tolerant. Others would not be so willing to help you as I am.

*(She stares at Psyche, waiting...)*

PSYCHE

Thank you.

APHRODITE

*(Smiling at her power over Psyche...)*

I am weary, and have not had time to care for myself as I should because of your carelessness. We cannot risk letting weariness mar the world's standard of beauty, can we?

PSYCHE

I... Never could—

APHRODITE

You are to fetch me a dram of beauty that I may—



PSYCHE

A dram of beauty? I... I do not understand.

APHRODITE

Why does that not surprise me? Honestly, Love must have been deaf as well as blind to cast favor upon such a stain as you. (*She calms herself with a breath.*) There is an ointment kept by Persephone. If you tell her that you are on an errand for me, she will—

PSYCHE

Persephone? The Lady of Hades?

APHRODITE

Of course.

PSYCHE

But no living person may enter the Underworld. How am I to—

APHRODITE

Surely someone as determined as you will find a way. I did not tell you how to retrieve the Stygian water, and yet you completed that task by yourself. You did complete it by yourself, did you not? (*She gives Psyche a momentary glare.*) I think the same will be true in this case. At least I certainly hope so... for your sake. It would be a shame if I had to waste more time being... creative.

*(Psyche is about to say something, but Aphrodite stares her into silence.)*

I must tend to Eros now. Return to me with the ointment. I think three days should be sufficient for such a straightforward endeavor. Don't you? (*She stares at Psyche, daring her to say something.*) Good.

*(Aphrodite exits with a flourish.)*

PSYCHE

The Underworld? (*She stumbles, catches herself, and then lowers herself into a chair or to the ground.*) Then let it be death.

*(Lights out.)*

ACT I

SCENE 3

*(It is the same chamber in Olympus. Psyche is sitting at a table considering a draught that she has just finished preparing for herself. There are herbs and such on the table – poisonous ones in theory, although any that aren't immediately obvious as common would do the trick. Providence enters, and considers Psyche for a moment.)*

PROVIDENCE

She has given you another task.

PSYCHE

She has.

PROVIDENCE

As challenging as collecting water from the head of the River Styx?

PSYCHE

Worse. Far worse.

PROVIDENCE

Tell me.

PSYCHE

Do you recall wondering what will become of this world upon my death?

PROVIDENCE

I do.

PSYCHE

Then wonder no further.

PROVIDENCE

Child, you must not give up. I know death feels like an easier end, but no matter how difficult—

PSYCHE

You do not understand, sweet Providence. Death *is* my task. Aphrodite sends me to the Underworld. She speaks of retrieving an ointment from Persephone, but that is merely a ruse. No mortal may reach that realm save by death, and certainly cannot return—

PROVIDENCE

Be at peace, my child. Things are never as bleak as—

PSYCHE

There is no peace left to me! Can you not see? I have no choice. If I refuse, she will envision such torture for me that... that I dare not consider! But to even attempt this task, first I must die.

PROVIDENCE

No.

PSYCHE

It is the only way. Death is the only step that will set this journey in motion. So I have brewed a potion...

*(She reaches for the potion, but Providence stays her hand and she falls silent. Providence considers the plants on the table.)*

PROVIDENCE

Belladonna. (*Considering another...*) Brugmansia, the Angel's Trumpet.

PSYCHE

It seemed fitting.

PROVIDENCE

Psyche, death is no friend to you. Not in this matter, nor any other.

PSYCHE

But—

PROVIDENCE

No. Be silent now, and heed the words of a friend. This task may have been given to wreak your undoing, but all hope is not lost, and we may yet foil her intentions. Mortals before you have undertaken the catabasis and returned intact from the Underworld.

PSYCHE

Myths, fantasy...

PROVIDENCE

Truths, I assure you. Truths that refused to fade, and so were disguised as folly to protect what the gods would keep secret.

PSYCHE

Then there *is* an entrance to the Underworld that can be reached—

PROVIDENCE

There is, but the challenges before you are far greater. Now listen most carefully. When you leave this city, you will descend to the south of Hellas, and climb the lone peak of Taenarum. There you will find a cave that will lead you to the Underworld.

PSYCHE

Thank you, divine Providence! Oh, thank you! I shall be on my—

PROVIDENCE

Child, finding the cave is just the beginning. There are many things you must know, if you would return to the world of the living. First, to cross the River Styx, you must find the ferryman, Charon, and pay him with a coin that you keep within your mouth. Let him take it from your lips when he demands payment.

PSYCHE

From my lips? Why may I not carry it in a pouch upon my belt?

PROVIDENCE

Earthly goods may not be transported into the Underworld in this way. The Hesperides, Daughters of the Evening, walk unseen upon the Dark Road. These Nymphs of the West will steal away anything that does not touch your skin, and no measure of vigilance can prevent this.

PSYCHE

Then I shall carry it within my hand, or my boot.

PROVIDENCE

No, for your hands will be full. In one you will carry a loaf of barley bread soaked in honey. In the other will you carry the Xirónis of Tartarus—

PSYCHE

The Xirónis of... I have never heard of this.

PROVIDENCE

When Zeus banished Cronus into the pits of Tartarus he bade Hephaestus fashion a gate to seal those pits that no one else would be cast into them but by his decision. He also had Hephaestus craft, the Xirónis of Tartarus, an artifact that can unlock those gates in the event that—

PSYCHE

Unlock the gates? But why—

PROVIDENCE

Please, child. It is important that you listen, and all will be made clear. Descend to the river, a coin in your mouth, a loaf in one hand, and the Xirónis in the other. This key is to be wrapped in a cloth of silk kept tight between your thumb and finger. Never put these items down, even for a moment. If you do, they will be stolen by the Hesperides and you will be lost forever.

PSYCHE

I understand.

PROVIDENCE

You will pay Charon with the coin, and then proceed to the gates of the Underworld. There you will use the loaf to distract Cerberus, the three-headed hound who guards those gates, and sneak past while he eats it. Proceed to the palace of Hades and Persephone, but once inside you must accept no hospitality – eat nothing, and remain standing at all times.

PSYCHE

Oh, Providence, what would I have done without you?

PROVIDENCE

We need not wonder, for I am here for you. But there is more. Persephone will undoubtedly ask why your hand is wrapped in silk. You must not let her see that you carry the Xirónis. Instead, you are to tell her that it is to protect an injury born from passing the gates. She will believe this.

PSYCHE

This is why it is to be wrapped.

*(Providence gives Psyche a stern “let me finish” look.)*

PROVIDENCE

After you convince Persephone to give you the ointment, return to the River Styx, but Charon will not ferry you back. Instead follow the river to the right until you come to a hillock with a wide fissure. Within you will find the first gate of Tartarus. Present the Xirónis, and the gate will open, and lock again behind you. Follow the path, and in forty paces you will see the second gate of Tartarus. Present the Xirónis again to pass into a second tunnel that will deposit you upon the other side of the river.

PSYCHE

I understand.

PROVIDENCE

This will be no easy journey, my child, but I have faith. You will prevail.

*(Psyche takes a deep breath, lets it out.)*

PSYCHE

Thank you. I know not how I came to deserve such kindness as you have shown, but I am grateful beyond words.

PROVIDENCE

Go now and prepare yourself. I will steal my way into the workshop of Hephaestus.

PSYCHE

Oh, Providence, I would not have you risk—

PROVIDENCE

I would have it no other way. Worry not, sweet child. I can walk unseen when the need arises, and the Xirónis will be returned before the God of Crafting notices its absence.

PSYCHE

You risk too much.

PROVIDENCE

There are those who would say so, but I have already started down my path. I'll not abandon it now.

PSYCHE

Then neither shall I. I love you, Providence, and pray that I will see you again when all is done.

PROVIDENCE

Off with you now.

*(Providence shoos Psyche out, and stares after her, an initial expression of love and compassion transforming into an unreadable mask. After a few moments, she takes a deep sigh, and turns just as Aphrodite and Hephaestus enter.)*

APHRODITE

Well?

PROVIDENCE

All proceeds according to plan.

APHRODITE

Then we are ready. Hephaestus, be a dear and fetch the Xirónis.

*(Hephaestus looks like he wants to object, but then Aphrodite smiles at him alluringly.)*

Please, my love. Time is of the essence.

*(Hephaestus stands still a moment, offended to be sent on an errand like a servant, but then turns and exits the way he came.)*

PROVIDENCE

You play a dangerous game. Your husband is no fool, and he knows of your... other interest.

APHRODITE

What if he does? He would be a fool to challenge the god of war. And Ares would be a fool to challenge him.

PROVIDENCE

So you intend to keep them both.

APHRODITE

Why not? Immortal though they may be, still they are men. And I know how to handle men.

PROVIDENCE

Even Eros?

APHRODITE

And what is that supposed to mean?

PROVIDENCE

Your son is in love, and he will not be swayed by your beauty like the others.

APHRODITE

That sentimental boy. He'll find another plaything. He always does. Time heals all wounds, they say.

PROVIDENCE

Of course.

APHRODITE

Eros will not interfere, and Hephaestus *will* remain true to me. As will you.

PROVIDENCE

Of course, my Goddess. I serve willingly.

APHRODITE

And you will be rewarded.

*(Hephaestus enters and walks to Providence, handing over the Xirónis with an ugly smile.)*

HEPHAESTUS

Here.

PROVIDENCE

So we are committed? Once I hand her this, there will be no turning back.

APHRODITE

There never was.

*(Lights out.)*



ACT I

SCENE 4

*(The lights come up in a small chamber in front of the gates of Tartarus. Psyche enters, a box from Persephone in one hand, and the Xirónis wrapped in silk in the other. She starts to walk towards the gate, and a voice – her own voice ever so slightly altered, like the difference between how people hear themselves versus how they hear a recording of themselves – comes from the depths and stops her.)*

VOICE

This is not the way.

PSYCHE

What?

VOICE

This is not the way.

PSYCHE

Who's there? Who is that?

*(There is no response, and after a moment she starts walking again.)*

VOICE

Turn back.

*(She stops again.)*

PSYCHE

Who is that? Who calls to me? *(Silence.)* I know someone is there. Show yourself. *(Silence.)* Why should I turn back?

VOICE

This is not your place.

PSYCHE

I must pass through if I am to return home.

VOICE

Only Tartarus lies beyond these gates. That is not your home.

PSYCHE

I do not travel to Tartarus, only to the second gate.

VOICE

There is no second gate...

PSYCHE

There is.

VOICE

I fear you are lost.

PSYCHE

No, I am not. I stand before the gates of Tartarus. I know where—

VOICE

You *are* lost.

PSYCHE

I know where I am.

VOICE

And yet you are lost.

PSYCHE

You speak nonsense. I will not heed you.

VOICE

That has forever been your downfall.

PSYCHE

You taunt me with riddles and games. I will not be misled.

VOICE

You are already misled.

PSYCHE

Stop it!

VOICE

Turn back.

PSYCHE

Stop it!!

VOICE

*(More forcefully)*

Turn back.

PSYCHE

No! Providence guides my steps, and I will not falter!

VOICE

You would sacrifice everything.

PSYCHE

No! Be silent! I do not know you, and I will not heed the advice of a stranger!

VOICE

In that truth do we fall, and the world with us.

PSYCHE

No more!

*(Psyche tears away the silk from the Xirónis and steps up to the gate. There is a sob from the voice, a sound of anguish and despair, and a moment later the gates swing silently open. Psyche starts towards them and then suddenly stops, awareness crashing down upon her.)*

Me? That was...

*(But before she can say anything more, there is a thunderclap and suddenly Zeus appears – as magically as special effects/budget allows.)*

ZEUS

You foolish girl! What have you done!?

*(He storms towards her, unaware as Aphrodite and Hephaestus appear behind him.)*

What madness has come upon you? How...

*(His gaze fall upon the Xirónis and he stops. His eyes grow wide, and suddenly he realizes what is going on. He spins around as Hephaestus raises his hammer, or some other artifact of power. He stumbles backwards through the gate, struck by some overwhelming force. As he is stumbling, Aphrodite raises a conch, blows a pure, sweet note, and the gates swing closed with Zeus on the other side. Zeus is stunned, and Psyche starts shaking in shock.)*

PSYCHE

What have I done?! What have I done!?!

*(Aphrodite walks towards Zeus...)*

APHRODITE

Hello, *father*. *(The word “father” is dripping with hatred and innuendo as explained below.)*

ZEUS

Aphrodite. You. You, of all my children. I should have known.

APHRODITE

How dare you? How *dare* you!? Even now you would prolong that lie!? You monster! Swine! Deceiver!

ZEUS

*(A measure of calm returning to him...)*

I see.

APHRODITE

Do you? Good. It's fitting that you see what your lies have wrought for you. Look around, nephew. Enjoy your last few moments of peace. I am sure that when my brother learns that you are here—

ZEUS

I do not fear Cronus.

APHRODITE

You should. He has had a long time to think on what you did to him. If you are lucky, perhaps he'll only castrate you in return. But then, this does not appear to be your lucky day, does it?

ZEUS

I should think Cronus would have come to peace with the situation by now. It would be rather hypocritical to hold a grudge given that he did the same to grandfather.

APHRODITE

*(Dripping with sarcasm...)*

I'm sure. Ever the rational thinker, Cronus.

ZEUS

Why, Aphrodite? Was what I did so terrible? Did I not love you as my own daughter? What matter if—

APHRODITE

What matter?! What *matter!*?! You lied to me! You treated me like your child, when I was your elder!

ZEUS

You are no elder to me.

APHRODITE

Words! You would dance with words at a moment such as this?

ZEUS

What matters is—

APHRODITE

*I'll* tell you what matters! You deceived me. You took advantage. You lied. You knew I was sister to Cronus! You knew that I should have taken his place when he fell! But you... consumed with greed... with avarice in your heart, you kept your foul secret! Tell me, nephew, was that your plan all along? When you found me on the shores, newly born of the sea? Were you already planning the downfall of my brother?

*(Zeus just stares at her, slowly shaking his head.)*

What? No sweet words from the silver tongue of the mighty sky god? Will you not even attempt to justify your offenses?

ZEUS

You have spun yourself a tale... a tale of self-pity, of outrage... of righteous indignation. And then let that story echo in your mind until there was room for nothing else. There are no words that could reach your heart now.

APHRODITE

Is that all you have to bear in your defense? Really, nephew. I had expected more.

ZEUS

And... *daughter*... I would give you more. Even now, if I could.

*(Zeus turns to regard Psyche.)*

Poor child. You deserved better. I made you Pisces, for you are the essence of Soul. Yet Aphrodite would have you the Water Bearer.

*(He looks at Aphrodite, and then a smile comes to his face – at the same time cruel and kind, crafty and sincere – as he turns back to Psyche.)*

So let it be.

*(Zeus reaches a hand out through the gates, and Psyche suddenly gasps and clutches her shoulder with both hands, dropping the Xirónis. Aphrodite rushes over, and pulls Psyche's dress/blouse down from her shoulder to reveal a pattern of freckles in the form of the constellation of Aquarius.)*

APHRODITE

Enough of your quaint symbols and empty metaphors. Enjoy your eternity in Tartarus, fallen god. Rest assured, the world will forget you soon enough.

*(Zeus starts to back up, and Psyche rushes to the gates, reaching for him.)*

PSYCHE

I'm so sorry!

APHRODITE

Not yet you aren't. But you will be.

*(Aphrodite gestures, and Psyche falls to the ground unconscious. Aphrodite looks at Hephaestus.)*

Bring her.