

HERKY JOKESON AND THE FAUX-LYMPIANS

by Dean O'Carroll

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SYNOPSIS: A loving parody of the beloved book series *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*, this fast-paced play spoofs all five books about the kid who learns his father is a Greek god. Herky Jokeson is a middle schooler who learns to his dismay that the Greek gods are real, just not quite the way you've read about them, and one of them is his father! Herky joins a camp for fellow half-and-halves (one godly parent, one mortal) and meets children of all the Faux-lympic gods—Snackrodite, Whine-onysus, Applaudo, etc. Soon he finds himself caught up in an epic war as the Titan Cronut schemes to return to power and overthrow the gods. With his friends Anapest, daughter of Mathena, and Rosita the Satyrist, Herky battles monsters, solves riddles, and learns what it's like when the people you look up to let you down.

DURATION: 75 minutes.

TIME: Present day.

PLACE: Various locations.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(11-18 females, 11-18 male, 5-30 any gender, extras)

HERKY JOKESON (m)	(217 lines)
ANAPEST (f).....	(119 lines)
ROSITA (f).....	(85 lines)
MS. ODD (f).....	(5 lines)
CLYDESRON (f).....	(66 lines)
SALVE JOKESON (f).....	(9 lines)
MINI-TOURIST (any).....	(3 lines)
WHINE-ONYSSUS (MR. W) (m).....	(12 lines)
BAREFISTA (f).....	(7 lines)
GLARES CAMPER 1 (any)	(3 lines)
GLARES CAMPER 2 (any)	(1 line)
GLARES CAMPER 3 (any)	(1 line)
MATHENA CAMPER 1 (any).....	(2 lines)
MATHENA CAMPER 2 (any).....	(1 line)
LINK (later LINK/CRONUT) (m).....	(50 lines)
SQUIRMES CAMPER 1 (any).....	(1 line)

SQUIRMES CAMPER 2 (any).....	(1 line)
BROSEIDON (m).....	(16 lines)
SEUSS (m).....	(11 lines)
THE BORACLE (any).....	(10 lines)
CASABLANCA FRADIAVOLO (f).....	(18 lines)
NEKKRO FRADIAVOLO (m)	(14 lines)
KID (any).....	(1 line)
MONICA PHOEBE DEERE (f).....	(19 lines)
AFRAIDES (m)	(12 lines)
HEREN (f)	(6 lines)
GLARES (m)	(1 line)
APPLAUDO (m)	(2 lines)
ARTIFICE (f).....	(1 line)
NOMEATER (f)	(1 line)
MATHENA (f).....	(6 lines)
SHLEPFASTUS (m).....	(1 line)
SNACKRODITE (f)	(1 line)
SQUIRMES (m).....	(2 lines)
HEAD WISE-CLOPS (any).....	(6 lines)
PERDUE (m)	(22 lines)
WISE-CLOPS 1 (any).....	(2 lines)
WISE-CLOPS 2 (any).....	(2 lines)
WISE-CLOPS 3 (any).....	(2 lines)
THILLIA (f).....	(6 lines)
ATLEAST (m).....	(18 lines)
PUN (m).....	(9 lines)
COLLAPSO (f).....	(9 lines)
PROM-METHEUS (m)	(3 lines)
MICHAELA BUBINGA* (f)	(1 line)
KIMMY GREENTHUMB* (f).....	(1 line)
MICKEY STOLID* (m).....	(2 lines)
MIKEY STOLID* (m).....	(2 lines)
SILINKY DE BEAUMARCHAIS* (f).....	(1 line)
CARL BLECHERDERF* (m).....	(1 line)
OLIVE* (any)	(2 lines)
PALM* (any)	(2 lines)
ARMY 1 (any)	(1 line)
ARMY 2 (any)	(1 line)

ARMY 3 (any)	(1 line)
ARMY 4 (any)	(1 line)
ARMY 5 (any)	(1 line)
ARMY 6 (any)	(1 line)
ARMY 7 (any)	(1 line)
ARMY 8 (any)	(1 line)
ARMY 9 (any)	(1 line)
CAMPER 1 (any).....	(8 lines)
CAMPER 2 (any).....	(5 lines)
CAMPER 3 (any).....	(2 lines)
CAMPER 4 (any).....	(1 line)
CAMPER 5 (any).....	(1 line)

EXTRAS:

KIDS (MUSEUM) (any)	(Non-Speaking)
GLARES CAMPERS any)	(Non-Speaking)
CAMPERS (any)	(Non-Speaking)
KIDS (HOTEL) (any).....	(Non-Speaking)
CRONUT'S ARMY (any).....	(Non-Speaking)
WHINE-ONYSUS CAMPERS* (any)....	(Non-Speaking)

* Indicates that the character is optional and does not have to appear unless it meets the needs of your production.

CASTING NOTE: In general, casting is very flexible, especially in terms of gender. With some cleverness, this could be acted by fewer than 20 performers.

SET

The set is designed with high adaptability in mind, featuring a minimalist approach that relies on lighting changes, sound effects, and the purposeful use of key props and small furniture to indicate shifts in location. Directors are free to expand upon the design as needed to suit the specific demands of their production.

COSTUME NOTES

Costumes are present day clothes for the campers and teachers. The Greek Gods/Goddesses can dress as elaborate or simply as the director chooses. There are battle scenes where armor will be necessary—make this as fun as possible. Below are character specific costumes needed:

MS. ODD – starts as a teacher, becomes a Furby.

CLYDESRON – starts as a teacher in a wheelchair, stands up and has hindquarters of a horse

MINI-TOURIST – dressed as an obnoxious American tourist with the horns of a bull.

SEUSS – “Cat in the Hat” hat

BORACLE – Old hippie.

WISE-CLOPSES & PERDUE – Classic gangsters (suits and fedoras), only one-eye each

PROM-METHEUS – tuxedo

PROPS

- floor-length skirt
- wheelchair
- painting: "Saturn Devouring His Son" by Goya
- pen
- piece of cardboard with "GO AWAY", and "EXIT" with an arrow written on it
- camera
- guitar
- coat rack
- backpack (Herky empties things from it, revealing snacks, clean underwear, and the Blam.)
- The Blam (shiny lightning bolt)
- bakery box with donuts and croissants
- pitcher for smoothies
- hairdryer
- pitcher of water and a glass
- globe (large)

- apple
- robe
- jar of Geek Fire
- scythe (large)
- paper with "LINK—YOU ARE THE FUTURE" written on it.
- Brandora's Breadbox
- shroud
- bow and arrow
- coin (at least one of the Wise-Clopes)
- The Golden Floss

DO NOT COPY

ACT ONE

HERKY enters. A teenage boy.

HERKY: Look. You don't want to be a half-and-half. No, not the stuff your grandfather puts in coffee—half human and half Greek god. But, if you suspect you are a half-and-half, there may be some clues. If you have a craving for gyros and souvlaki, you might be a half-and-half. If you've ever defeated a mythological monster in combat, you might be a half-and-half. If you have ever caused a war between two city-states—

HERKY is interrupted by the entrance of ANAPEST and ROSITA. ANAPEST is a girl HERKY'S age. ROSITA is a female satyrist—a humanoid with goatlike legs—who should look about the same age as ANAPEST and HERKY.

ANAPEST: I think that's enough, Herky.

HERKY: What? Why? I'm explaining what it's like to be a half-and-half.

ROSITA: No. You're not. You're just doing old Jeff Foxworthy material.

HERKY: Well, yeah, but—Oh! *(To the audience.)* These are my friends Anapest and Rosita.

ANAPEST: We'll try to keep Herky on track while he's telling our story.

ROSITA: Half-and-half's brains tend to wander off to other places because the godly part of them wants to be fighting battles or playing the lyre or transforming into a swan. So that's why half-and-halves sometimes do poorly in school.

HERKY: If you do poorly in school, you just might be a half-and-half!

ANAPEST: Or, maybe you're lucky and you're just not very smart.

HERKY: That's what I thought I was for the first several years of my life, until that field trip to the museum.

Several KIDS enter.

ROSITA: I was on that field trip too, but I was still pretending to be one of Herky's human classmates so he... well, you'll see. But that's why I was wearing this long skirt over my goat legs.

ROSITA puts on a floor-length skirt.

ROSITA: So, at this point in the story, Herky and I are classmates and friends.

HERKY and ROSITA high-five.

ROSITA: And he still thinks I'm human. Oh! We need the teachers!

ROSITA runs offstage. MS. ODD enters.

HERKY: That's my math teacher, Ms. Odd. And if you ever thought your math teacher was out to get you—

ANAPEST: Stop giving away the plot twists!

CLYDESRON (in disguise as Dr. Trotter) enters in a wheelchair pushed by ROSITA.

HERKY: That's one teacher I liked. Her name's Dr. Trotter. Or was it?

ANAPEST: Seriously, Herky!

CLYDESRON: And here, on loan from Spain, we have the painting "Saturn Devouring His Son." Now Saturn is the Roman name of Cronut... I mean... Cronos, who was of course born of Uranus.

HERKY, now a part of the scene, giggles at this.

CLYDESRON: Herky Jokeson, have you even looked at this painting yet?

HERKY: Gross! Did he bite that guy's head off?

CLYDESRON: Yes, well, such imagery is typical in the works of Goya.

HERKY: Goya? Isn't he the canned garbanzo beans guy?

CLYDESRON: ...Moving along.

They start to head offstage. Everyone but ANAPEST, HERKY, and MS. ODD exits. MS. ODD is keeping HERKY back.

MS. ODD: Wait, Mr. Jokeson! We have much to discuss.

HERKY: Is this about my last math test? 'Cause what are numbers, really?

MS. ODD: This isn't about your math test! This is about your doom!

HERKY: So my history test then?

MS. ODD: I know who you are, Herky Jokeson! And that is why you must die!

ANAPEST: And that's when Ms. Odd revealed her true form—one of the scariest beings in the universe... a Furby!

A costume reveal shows that MS. ODD is actually a scary fluffy toy robot. She begins to make cute-but-creepy chirping noises as she approaches HERKY.

MS. ODD: Now you will die, Herky Jokeson!

ROSITA wheels CLYDESRON back on.

CLYDESRON: Herky! Catch this and defend yourself!

CLYDESRON throws HERKY a pen.

HERKY: A pen? Does this magically turn into a sword or something?

CLYDESRON: Haven't you ever heard the pen is mightier than the sword?

ROSITA runs out with a piece of cardboard and hands it to HERKY.

ROSITA: Here, write on this.

HERKY: Okay...

HERKY "writes" on the cardboard—for the purposes of staging it should be pre-written. HERKY holds up the cardboard for the audience to see. It says "GO AWAY."

MS. ODD: Curse you, Herky Jokeson! Next time you won't be so lucky!

Lights shift as ANAPEST, HERKY, and ROSITA come forward while the other characters exit.

HERKY: Things got even weirder when I told my mother about this and, when school ended for the summer she took me to Long Island.

ANAPEST: Why is it weird to go to Long Island?

HERKY: She never liked delicatessens that much.

Herky's mother, SALVE JOKESON, enters. ANAPEST and ROSITA step aside as HERKY joins the scene.

SALVE: Herky, I want to show you the beach where I met your father.

HERKY: You never talk about my father very much.

SALVE: Well, maybe it's time we should.

ROSITA enters, now with her goat legs visible.

ROSITA: Herky! Ms. Jokeson!

HERKY: Rosita! Why do your legs look like that?

SALVE: Herky, your friends are at an age when bodies start changing—

HERKY: Into goats?

ROSITA: It's okay. Herky needs to know the truth. We have to run! Something is coming!

ROSITA points offstage.

SALVE: Get Herky to camp! I'll try to buy you some time.

SALVE runs off.

HERKY: What is that thing my mother is running towards?

ROSITA: Come on!

A flash of light from offstage as we hear SALVE scream.

HERKY: She vanished! What is that thing and what did it do to my mom?

ROSITA: I'm so sorry! I tried to save you both!

HERKY: I am like the only adolescent on earth who likes his mother! I mean... she makes me special plaid-colored food!

ROSITA: Plaid? Like the pattern plaid? Never mind! It's coming!

HERKY: What is it?

ROSITA: One of the most terrifying monsters ever. The Mini-Tourist!

THE MINI-TOURIST enters, short and dressed as an obnoxious American tourist with the horns of a bull. It snaps photos as it talks.

MINI-TOURIST: Oh! There's so much culture and history all around me! But why can't I get ranch dressing and Diet Mountain Dew! And how come nobody speaks English? Excuse me, which way to the Loov-ree museum and is that where they keep the Parthenon?

HERKY: No! No! It's hideous!

MINI-TOURIST: I'm just going to waddle incredibly slowly down a crowded street while I complain about how expensive everything is, okay?

HERKY: Hey! Look over there! It's an Applebee's!

MINI-TOURIST: Applebee's? Like in my hometown? What a perfect spot for dinner!

MINI-TOURIST exits.

ROSITA: You did it! You defeated the Mini-Tourist!

HERKY: I... I...

HERKY collapses. Then, immediately—

HERKY: *(To the audience.)* I had passed out, but my mother had vanished—

ANAPEST: If you're passed out, you don't get to tell this part of the story! Eyes closed, mouth drooling, you're unconscious.

HERKY: Fine.

HERKY lies down again. ANAPEST and ROSITA stand over him. CLYDESRON enters, still in the wheelchair. ROSITA now has a guitar and keeps it for the rest of the play.

CLYDESRON: How is he?

ROSITA: I think he's going to be okay. He's definitely a half-and-half.

ANAPEST: No human being could generate this much saliva in their sleep.

HERKY wakes up.

HERKY: Where am I?

CLYDESRON: You're safe now.

HERKY: Dr. Trotter? Now I really need to know where I am.

CLYDESRON: This is Camp Half-and-Half.

ANAPEST: It's a place for kids with one parent who's a Greek god.

HERKY: You mean, like, _____? (*Insert a celebrity with a Greek name.*) What are you talking about?

ANAPEST: Buckle up. There's a lot of backstory.

CLYDESRON: The first thing you need to know is... the Greek gods are real. More or less everything from mythology really happened. And the gods still involve themselves with human affairs.

HERKY: No way. If that were true, it'd be all over social media.

ANAPEST: No. Humans don't notice the gods and all the other creatures and monsters because they don't want to. Because of the Moist.

HERKY: Oh, I hate that word!

ANAPEST: What word? "Moist"?

HERKY: Please stop!

ROSITA: That's how it works. Like how you just don't want to hear the word, humans just don't want to believe mythology is real. So... they don't see it all around them.

CLYDESRON: But now that you have learned the beginning of the truth, you will see through the Moist. Which means I can do this.

CLYDESRON stands up from her wheelchair, revealing she has the hindquarters of a horse.

HERKY: Dr. Trotter! You can walk? And you have the body of a horse?

CLYDESRON: My real name is Clydesron. I am a Mentaur, half horse, half teacher.

HERKY: And what about your legs, Rosita? Are you half goat?

ROSITA: Um... kind of. I'm a satyrist.

HERKY: A satirist?

ROSITA: Yes, a musical satyrist. I'm working on a song parody right now. (*Sings a line or two of a bad parody of a popular song. A simple word substitution like "Bake It Off" or "Bowling in the Deep."*)

CLYDESRON: Not now, Rosita.

HERKY: So what are you? Half cute girl, half penguin or something?

ANAPEST: N-no. I'm a demigod, like you.

HERKY: And Zeus and Hera and all those gods are real?

CLYDESRON: Yes, though, over the years, mortals have gotten their names and personalities a bit wrong. So they won't seem like the Olympians you've read about. That's why some half-and-halves call them the Faux-Lympians. For example, our camp director is the god you know as the god of a beverage made from fermented grapes.

HERKY: You mean Dionysus, the god of wine.

CLYDESRON: Yes, well he's actually the god of a different kind of whine. Here he comes now. Please meet Whine-onyesus.

WHINE-ONYESUS enters.

WHINE-ONYESUS: Why do I have to run a summer camp? I hate bug juice and gorp! Does Reveille have to be so loud? Why is the lake so wet?

CLYDESRON: Lord Whine-Onyesus, meet our newest camper, Herky Jokeson.

WHINE-ONYESUS: What? Hunky Junkson? Whatever. Why are there so many mosquitos?

CLYDESRON: This is the boy who defeated a furby and a mini-tourist!

WHINE-ONYESUS: So what does he want, a parade? Where's my celebration? Where would the Internet be if it weren't for people whining?

WHINE-ONYESUS exits, still whining.

HERKY: Wait! The mini-tourist! My mother! What happened to my mother?

ANAPEST: (*To the audience.*) We told him the bad news. But we're going to skip that part.

HERKY: There's a lot to this story! We can't take time for everything.

ANAPEST: Sure. That's why.

ROSITA: Later, we gave Herky a tour of the camp's different cabins.

CLYDESRON has exited by now.

ROSITA: So those are the cabins for the children of Whine-onysus, Nomeater, Shlepfastus, Snackrodite, Applaudo—uh oh. Here come the kids from the Glares cabin. (*Pronounced GLARE-eez.*) He's the god of war.

BAREFISTA and a few GLARES CAMPERS enter.

BAREFISTA: Hey! Jokeson! My name's Barefista, daughter of Glares. And we're gonna grind you up like lamb for moussaka.

HERKY: What's moussaka?

GLARES CAMPER 1: It's a delicious Greek dish made with eggplant and—

BAREFISTA: Hey! We came here to threaten him, not give him recipes!

GLARES CAMPER 1: Whoops, sorry.

BAREFISTA and the GLARES CAMPERS exit.

ANAPEST: That's my cabin, for children of Mathena. Our mother's a war deity, like Glares, but also logical things, like mathematics.

Two MATHENA CAMPERS enter.

MATHENA CAMPER 1: The Birch and Swinnerton-Dyer Conjecture will never be proven.

MATHENA CAMPER 2: Special cases of it already have been proven!

MATHENA CAMPER 1: I will murder you with an axe!

ROSITA: Which brings us to your temporary home, the Squirmes Cabin. (*That name is pronounced SQUIRM-eez.*)

LINK enters, a teen a bit older than ANAPEST and HERKY.

LINK: So, I understand this is our new resident.

ANAPEST: (*Crushing on him.*) Hi, Link.

LINK: Hey, Pesty. Herky, my name's Link. Head counselor at Squirmes Cabin. We welcome every camper who doesn't yet know which god is their parent, plus all the children of the minor Greek Gods, like Trickate and Hebe-Jeebie and John Stamos.

HERKY: Okay, but why is your father called Squirmes?

LINK: Well, dear old dad is the god of so many things—messengers, thieves, travelers, trade, sports, et cetera. So his kids kind of have a tough time keeping still.

Some SQUIRMES CAMPERS enter.

SQUIRMES CAMPER 1: Let's play softball! Wait, no! Let's make tie-dye! Wait, no! Let's roast marshmallows! Wait, no! A singalong! Wait, no!

SQUIRMES CAMPER 2: I know! Let's just run around like maniacs!

SQUIRMES CAMPERS ad-lib support this and run offstage screaming.

HERKY: But you're not like that.

LINK: No. I'm... not a lot like my dad. He did give me a quest once. It was a super dangerous one. I had to travel far into a hazardous place full of horrifying creatures... it was an Ikea on a Sunday. He wanted a bookcase. Anyway, we have a bunk all set up for you. Welcome to Squirmes Cabin. See you, Rosita, Pesty.

Ad-lib goodbye from ROSITA as LINK exits...

ANAPEST: Yeah, bye, Link... maybe later we would, um... bye.

HERKY: Um... so I noticed a couple of cabins that looked empty.

ROSITA: Well, Heren, Queen of the Gods, never had any mortal children because, as goddess of marriage, she never violates her vows.

ANAPEST: Unlike her husband. The King of the Gods had plenty of kids with mortals, but the Big Three promised not to do that anymore.

HERKY: The Big Three? Ford, GM, and Chrysler?

ANAPEST: The king of gods and the air, the god of the sea, and the god of the Underworld. They're brothers. Millennia ago they joined forces to defeat their father, Cronut, who you call Cronos.

HERKY: From that painting of him eating his children!

ROSITA: Well, that was kind of why they wanted to defeat him.

HERKY: Was Cronut a god, too?

CLYDESRON enters.

CLYDESRON: Cronut was neither god nor monster. Just as an earthly cronut is neither croissant nor donut but some horrific thing in between.

HERKY: But why did Big Three stop having kids with mortals?

ANAPEST: Their children were responsible for one of the greatest conflicts of the 20th Century.

HERKY: You mean...

CLYDESRON: Yes. They caused the Cola Wars.

ROSITA: Ever since then, they promised never to have any more children.

ANAPEST: So there is no way your father is one of the Big Three gods!

HERKY: *(To the audience.)* Spoiler alert. He is.

ANAPEST: The reason Camp Half-and-Half exists is to honor the gods. To pass on their endless wisdom.

CLYDESRON: Think about all we owe to them and to Ancient Greek culture—mathematics, science, philosophy, drama.

HERKY: Diners in New Jersey.

ANAPEST: You need to take this seriously. Excuse me. I have some Linking to do. I mean... some thinking to do.

ANAPEST exits.

CLYDESRON: She's right, Herky. Take all the wisdom you can from the gods. ...Though you're not wrong about the diners.

CLYDESRON exits.

HERKY: So Anapest is, like, totally crushing on Link, huh?

ROSITA: Ever since I brought them here when she was a little kid who ran away from home. She met two other runaway demigods—Link and this other girl, Thillia. I was assigned to bring them to camp. We were close when we were attacked by monsters! Thillia stayed behind to fight them off while we made it to safety.

HERKY: So she died to save you?

ROSITA: No! The king of gods took pity on her and turned her into this.

A stagehand brings out a coat rack.

HERKY: A coat rack? He turned her into a coat rack?

ROSITA: Don't question the infinite wisdom of the gods, Herky!

HERKY: So if I hadn't defeated the mini-tourist, what would he have turned me into? An ottoman? An air-fryer?

ROSITA: No, he saved Thillia because... she was his daughter.

HERKY: I thought the Big Three didn't have kids with mortals anymore.

ROSITA: Yeah, they promised, but, there was this beautiful chorus girl in the touring company of *The Producers*. And the king had always been a Mel Brooks fan, so he saw her, and they hit it off, and...

HERKY: It's good to be the king. Hey, if you brought them to camp when Anapest was little, were you a kid, too? And by kid I mean...

ROSITA: Yeah, I know. Goat jokes. No, I was an adolescent. I still am because satyrists age slower than humans. Ironic, because actual satire gets old really fast. Yeah, those three were my first assignment. I blew it pretty bad. I didn't get another one until you. But someday, I want to go on the greatest quest of all, to find the long-lost god of all satyrists, the Great God Pun.

HERKY: Pun? The Great God Pun? Like... dad jokes?

ROSITA: For us, Pun really is like our father. But one day he vanished, leaving a note that said "This world is getting nuts. Cashew later." But maybe, some day, I can be the one to find him!

HERKY: *(To the audience.)* Hey, thanks for sticking with us through all that exposition.

ROSITA: The next scene has lots of violence. It'll wake you up.

ANAPEST and LINK enter in armor with weapons and carrying more which they hand to HERKY and ROSITA, who put them on during the following dialogue.

ANAPEST: Suit up! It's time for kick the can!

LINK: Full armor, full weapons! You sneak into enemy territory, and kick a can to release all the prisoners. Us versus the Glares kids and whoever they bullied into being on their team. Come on!

CAMPERS enter, armed, armored. BAREFISTA leads the other team.

BAREFISTA: No can will stand unkicked this day! This is Massapequa!

Music. A battle ensues. It can last as long as desired. Eventually, the only people left on stage are BAREFISTA and some GLARES CAMPERS, who have HERKY cornered. Music fades.

BAREFISTA: Hey look! We got the new kid.

HERKY: Hey, guys! So... your dad's the war god, huh? War! Good gosh, y'all! What is it good for? Absolutely everything!

GLARES CAMPER 1: What should we do with him?

BAREFISTA: Well, we did get in trouble the last time we stabbed a new camper. So... let's throw him in the lake!

GLARES CAMPERS cheer. They grab HERKY, amid ad-libs.

HERKY: No! Wait! Don't!

Amid ad-libs they drag him offstage. A loud splash is heard. BAREFISTA and the GLARES CAMPERS reenter.

GLARES CAMPER 2: That was great!

BAREFISTA: Wisdom of the gods! Wait! Do you hear something?

GLARES CAMPER 3: It's the whole lake! Coming right at us!

The sound of roaring water is heard (or maybe an appropriate musical sting) and, in some theatrical manner—cardboard cutouts, streamers on a leaf blower, etc.—an enormous wave washes onstage from where HERKY exited, washing BAREFISTA and the GLARES CAMPERS offstage, possibly in slow motion. HERKY enters behind the wave.

HERKY: That's right! You throw me in the lake, I throw the lake at you!

ANAPEST, LINK, ROSITA, and several CAMPERS enter.

ANAPEST: You turned the lake into a tsunami! How did you do that?

HERKY: I don't know. I just... did it.

CLYDESRON enters.

CLYDESRON: Children, we are about to receive some visitors.

Music. BROSEIDON enters, a surfer dude. Music fades.

BROSEIDON: Most righteous, brah! Totally radical wave work, little dude.

HERKY: Who are you?

BROSEIDON: I am the god of the gnarliest of waves. Master of the awesome fathoms of the deep. I am Broseidon. And I am your father.

HERKY: You're my father?

ANAPEST: But you weren't supposed to have any more children with mortals.

BROSEIDON: Yeah. I totally flaked on that. See, little Hercules Jokeson, your mom was so righteous! When we met, my infinite godly wisdom told me we were destined to have a little bambino together.

HERKY: Yeah, well, thanks to you, she's dead now.

BROSEIDON: Good news on that front, compadre! Your mom is not dead. She's being held prisoner in the Underworld by my brother the god of death. So... no biggie.

HERKY: Why is the god of death holding my mom prisoner?

BROSEIDON: It's like this whole thing, brah. I'm gonna let my bro explain it. Ladies and gentlemen, here he is, the Big Kahuna, El Grande Queso, the king of gods, Seuss!

HERKY: Did he say Zeus?

ROSITA: No. He said Seuss.

SEUSS enters, the king of gods, in a Cat in the Hat hat.

SEUSS:

I am Seuss, I'm the king of the Grecian divinity
I'm so great I once counted twice to infinity
I'm the master of all the gods up on Olympus
When you pay us a tribute, don't dare try to scrimp us
But you whelp, Herky Jokeson, you're in quite a jam
I believe you're the scoundrel who's stolen my Blam!

HERKY: What is he talking about?

CLYDESRON: "Blam" is what he calls his greatest weapon, the thunderbolt.

HERKY: And he thinks I stole it?

SEUSS:

My bolt zipped and it zapped, not the least bit furshlugginer
And to think it's been nicked by some two-bit Blam-burgular!

It takes some doing to rhyme "furshlugginer" with "blamburglar" but I trust you to make it work—probably something like fur-SHLURG-in-er/blam-BURG-ul-er.

ANAPEST: (To HERKY.) I'll talk to him. I'm not called Anapest for nothing. (To Seuss.)

But Lord Seuss, Herky Jokeson is not some Blam plunderer
He is just a dumb kid! He would not steal your thunderer!

HERKY: Why would I steal your Thunderbolt?

SEUSS:

Do not think you can fool me with lies and dramatics!
This one told you to steal it, the god of aquatics!

BROSEIDON: Bro! Why would I want a thunderbolt? I'm more of a typhoon dude. If you ask me, the guy who stole it is our other brother, the dude who kidnapped Herky's mom, my former main squeeze. The original deadhead himself.

CLYDESRON: The god of the Underworld does seem a more likely suspect.

SEUSS:

Very well, that's your quest then my young Hercules
Point your shoes towards the Underworld, if you so please
I will give you a week, seven days, seven nights
To undo all these wrongs and replace them with rights
So now move with the speed of a hare not a tortoise
To the land of all souls who've gone past rigor mortis
Be swift in your travels, young demigod Herky
Don't you make that wrong turn when you pass Albuquerque
If you fail, I'll bring plagues, such as famine and drought
Also pestilence, war, and bad Wi-Fi! Seuss out!

SEUSS exits.

BROSEIDON: Okay. That dude is my ride, so I gotta go. Good luck on the quest. Hang loose, Herkerino. Bro, wait up! I call shotgun!

BROSEIDON exits.

HERKY: I have to go on a quest to the Underworld?

CLYDESRON: I'm afraid so.

ANAPEST: You are so lucky!

CLYDESRON: If the god of the Underworld has stolen the Blam, he could use it to cause massive death and destruction. I'm told he's been wanting to increase his kingdom. People just aren't dying like they used to. Look at _____. (*Insert name of an elderly celebrity.*) He/She's been an old lady/man for forty years now.

HERKY: But I can't do this alone!

ROSITA: You don't have to. I'm coming with you. I'll bring my guitar so you'll have the power of musical parodies by your side. (*Sings a bar of another terrible parody.*)

ANAPEST: (*Stopping her.*) I'm coming, too. The only problem is, nobody knows where the entrance to the Underworld is.

CLYDESRON: But perhaps we can get a clue if we consult... the Boracle.

HERKY: The Boracle?

THE BORACLE enters, an old hippie.

BORACLE: Hey, did I hear my name, man?

CLYDESRON: Boracle, can you tell these three what lies in store for them?

BORACLE: Sure thing, man. Hey, did you know Richie Havens wasn't supposed to be the opening act for Woodstock? No, it was supposed to be Sweetwater, but they got stuck in traffic on Route 6. And I was bummed, because I saw them open for the Animals in '68. But then Havens starts playing guitar with that open tuning and—

CLYDESRON: Respectfully, great Boracle, have you a prophecy to help these young heroes find the entrance to the Underworld?

BORACLE: And Hoffman bursts on stage during The Who's set and I'm thinking "Hey, you couldn't have done this during Sha Na Na?"

HERKY: This really is a Boracle. I've never been more bored in my life.

CLYDESRON: Please, the prophecy?

BORACLE: Oh, right. I'm gonna need some help from Creedence for this.

(Sings.)

I see a bad moon a-rising
Sin City is where you'll make your way
To get that earth-shakin' lightnin'
But someone here is going to betray.

The answers you will see

In Hotel I-L-P.

There's a bad moon on the rise.

ROSITA: I feel like song parodies are supposed to be my thing.

ANAPEST: Sin City? That's Las Vegas, right? But what's Hotel I-L-P?

BORACLE: Who knows? What you should quest for is a tape of "Teenager in Love" the only song performed at Woodstock that went unrecorded.

BORACLE exits.

HERKY: Did that rejected Ben & Jerry's flavor say I'll get betrayed?

LINK puts a backpack on HERKY while he speaks.

LINK: Every road trip has a few speed bumps, Herky. Good luck. Hope you do better on your quest than I did on mine. I didn't even get any meatballs.

ANAPEST: Hey, Link, do you wish me luck, too?

ANAPEST opens her arms for a hug.

LINK: Uh... sure.

He gives her a friendly but unromantic, gentle shoulder punch.

LINK: May the wisdom of the gods be with you.

Everyone exits except ANAPEST, CLYDESRON, HERKY and ROSITA.

CLYDESRON: I wish you well. Few have ever come back from the land of the dead. Only Orpheus, Aeneas, and the career of Robert Downey, Jr. (*Sees their concerned faces.*) Oh, but I'm sure you three middle-schoolers will do just fine!

CLYDESRON exits.

ANAPEST: So, we started the quest.

Music.

HERKY: And we made it to Las Vegas.

ROSITA: This is a weird place for a satyrist to be. It's simultaneously a self-parody and taking itself incredible seriously.

Music fades.

ANAPEST: So where can we find this "Hotel I-L-P"?

HERKY: Hey! Maybe it's that!

Stagehands bring out a sign that says "In Loco Parentis Hotel."

HERKY: "In Loco Parentis"—does that mean "your parents are crazy"?

ANAPEST: It means "in place of parents." Let's go in.

Music. KIDS enter, doing fun things. Ambient sounds of video games and partying.

HERKY: Look at this place! Video games! Bounce houses! Mini-golf!

ROSITA: Karaoke! Dance clubs! A Weird AI hologram!

ANAPEST: Spelling bees! Engineering fairs! Ted Talks!

ANAPEST, HERKY, and ROSITA: This is awesome!

They break off to do their own thing.

HERKY: Of course it was a trap. As I learned when I met two weird kids.

CASABLANCA and NEKKRO FRADIAVOLO enter, gloomy and deadpan.

HERKY: Hey! Isn't this place cool?

CASABLANCA: Yeah. It's totally rad.

NEKKRO: I haven't had this much fun since Hands Across America.

CASABLANCA: Are you being sarcastic?

NEKKRO: I can't tell anymore.

HERKY: Well, hi. I'm Herky Jokeson.

CASABLANCA: I'm Casablanca Fradiavolo. This is my brother, Nekkro.

NEKKRO: Nice you meet you. Whatever “nice” means.

HERKY: How long have you guys been here?

CASABLANCA: A few days. It was right after the Mets won the World Series.

HERKY: That was a million years ago! Like... the 80s!

This dialogue can be adjusted to some other reference to something that hasn't happened since the 1980s.

HERKY: But you're still kids! This place is some kind of time trap! Anapest! Rosita! Get over here!

ROSITA: What is it? I was about to perform my new song in the karaoke room—*(Insert title of terrible song parody.)*

ANAPEST: And I was about to win the Settlers of Catan tournament!

HERKY: We have to go! We might already have missed our deadline.

ROSITA: But I don't want to go.

ANAPEST: Yeah, me either.

HERKY: Ugh... I can't believe I'm saying this but... the Wisdom of the Gods demands that we go!

ANAPEST: You're right!

CASABLANCA: Did you say the Wisdom of the Gods?

HERKY: Long story, but our parents are Greek gods and we're on a quest.

NEKKRO: Us too. Our dad's a god. He brought us here to hide from Seuss.

ANAPEST: Which god is your father?

CASABLANCA: The god of the Underworld.

ANAPEST: You're coming with us!

ANAPEST, CASABLANCA, HERKY, NEKKRO, and ROSITA run off.

KID: Hey everybody! Limbo contest!

Cheers. Music. KIDS dance offstage. Music and sounds fade. ANAPEST, CASABLANCA, HERKY, NEKKRO, and ROSITA run back on.

ROSITA: We're out! I'm going to see if I can find out what day it is.

ROSITA runs off.

HERKY: Can we talk?

He pulls ANAPEST aside.

HERKY: We're about to go battle the God of the Underworld! Why do you think it's a good idea to bring two of his children onto our team?

ANAPEST: Because, Saltwater Brain—

HERKY: That's not a good insult, Wisdom Chick.

ANAPEST: But "Wisdom Chick" is, Saltwater Brain? We're inviting them because they are clearly the ones the Boracle sent us to find. They must know the way to the Underworld!

HERKY: But remember how the Boracle also said someone would betray us? What if they turn us over to daddy as soon as we get there?

ANAPEST: They don't like their dad! He locked them in that hotel for, like, 40 years!

HERKY: Forty years of video games and junk food! What torture!

ANAPEST: But think of everything they missed in there since the 80s!

HERKY: What did they miss? Terrorism? Global Warming? Facebook?

ROSITA enters.

ROSITA: We were in there for three days! We have less than two hours!

ANAPEST: Oh, fractal! We'll never make it!

ANAPEST stomps off to talk with CASABLANCA and NEKKRO.

HERKY: Man! Anapest keeps calling me Saltwater Brain, the dumbest insult in the history of insults!

ROSITA: Yeah, I really hope you two start dating. Hmm. I wonder if Young Adult fiction gave me some weird ideas of what constitutes the foundation of a healthy relationship. Still. I ship you two.

HERKY: Hey, Anapest is cute but plenty of girls are too and—hello!

HERKY watches as MONICA PHOEBE DEERE enters, on her phone.

MONICA PHOEBE: You didn't see it? It was right there in the fountain outside the Bellagio! Some kind of water monster! Wait. There's a girl here with goat legs and I want to find out what's up with that.

She hangs up.

ROSITA: You can see through the Moist!

HERKY: Still hate that word.

MONICA PHOEBE: Y'know, that word never bothered me.

ANAPEST: Are you a half-and-half? Is one of your parents a god?

MONICA PHOEBE: No! My name is Monica Phoebe Deere and, as you can tell, my parents were both just big fans of a certain sitcom.

ANAPEST: There is something special about you. Herky, do you have a pen?

HERKY hands her the magic pen.

HERKY: Sure.

ANAPEST: *(Writing something on a scrap of paper.)* We're in a rush, but, when you can, come to this address.

ANAPEST hands her the paper and the pen.

MONICA PHOEBE: Uh... okay.

HERKY: So, Casablanca and Nekkro. Where's the entrance to the Underworld?

CASABLANCA: It moves. Always to the most soul-crushing place imaginable.

MONICA PHOEBE: That would be the roulette wheel at the Excalibur.

ANAPEST: That's it! Let's go!

ANAPEST, CASABLANCA, HERKY, NEKKRO, and ROSITA run off.

MONICA PHOEBE: Hey, wait! You forgot your pen!

She follows after them. Music. Lights shift and perhaps scenery is brought on. We are now in the Underworld. ANAPEST, CASABLANCA, HERKY, NEKKRO, and ROSITA enter. Music fades.

NEKKRO: Well, here it is, home sweet sepulchral home. The Underworld.

CASABLANCA: Weekends when Dad had custody were... weird.

HERKY: All right! Where is he?

ANAPEST: Herky, he's the god of death. It's not like he's just going to come roaring out of nowhere.

A roar is heard. AFRAIDES (uh-FRAID-eez.) leaps in, growling in a Bert Lahr-ish way.

AFRAIDES: Put 'em up! Put 'em up! Which one of you first? I'll fight you all together if you want! (*Sees ROSITA'S guitar.*) Oh! Pulling an axe on me, eh?

ANAPEST: My lord, we just came here to talk.

AFRAIDES: Well, forget about it. I ain't sayin' boo. (*Suddenly afraid.*) Aah!

ROSITA: What?

AFRAIDES: Somebody said "boo" and it scared me!

HERKY: But you're the one who said "boo"!

AFRAIDES: Ah! Now you said it! Oh, my nerves are shot to pieces! (*Starts to cry.*)

ANAPEST: Why, you're just a big coward!

AFRAIDES: Of course I am! You'd be afraid too if you had to live in the Underworld where you're constantly surrounded by g-g-g-ghosts!

NEKKRO: Boys and girls, our father. Afraides, the god of the Underworld.

AFRAIDES: Casablanca! Nekkro! I thought I hid you to keep you safe!

CASABLANCA: Over-protective much?

ANAPEST: Look! Lord Afraides. We appeal to your godly wisdom.

AFRAIDES: Don't say wisdom! It makes me think of pulling teeth and I'm scared of the dentist!

ROSITA: We'll stop scaring you if you give back what you stole.

AFRAIDES: What are you talking about? I never took nothing!

HERKY: You stole Seuss's Blam!

AFRAIDES: What would I wanna take that thing for? I'm afraid of thunder! I thought you stole it!

HERKY: What? Look, I don't even care! I'm just here to save my mother!

AFRAIDES: Oh, yeah, sure. Her I took. See, I thought if I had her, you wouldn't use that Blam to hurt me.

HERKY: I told you! I don't have it! Here! Search my backpack!

HERKY starts emptying things from his backpack.

HERKY: See! Snacks, clean underwear... uh oh ...

HERKY pulls out the Blam—a shiny lightning bolt.

AFRAIDES: Yikes! Feet don't fail me now!

AFRAIDES runs off.

CASABLANCA: Wait, Dad!

NEKKRO: Come back!

CASABLANCA and NEKKRO run after him.

HERKY: How did this get in my backpack?

ANAPEST: Somebody must have put it in there hoping you'd take the blame for taking the blam!

A deep evil laugh is heard.

HERKY: What was that?

CASABLANCA and NEKKRO enter.

CASABLANCA: So Dad is hiding under his bed.

NEKKRO: But he says you can have your mom back.

SALVE runs on.

SALVE: Herky!

HERKY: Mom!

They embrace.

SALVE: Oh, Herky! I want to make you the biggest plaid meatloaf ever!

HERKY: Mom! You've been trapped in the Underworld! I can do the cooking! Well... I can order in. But are you sure you're allowed to leave the Underworld?

NEKKRO: Dad says it's fine 'cause she was just fake dead.

CASABLANCA: Too bad your mom's a poseur.

ANAPEST: Now we have to get out of here and get Seuss his Blam!

ROSITA: But how can we possibly escape the Underworld?

ANAPEST: Herky, do you still have that magic pen?

HERKY: *(Feeling in his pockets.)* Um... oh no!

MONICA PHOEBE enters. She has the pen.

MONICA PHOEBE: Do you mean this?

MONICA PHOEBE hands HERKY the pen.

ROSITA: You came all the way into the Underworld to return a pen?

MONICA PHOEBE: It's a nice pen. Hey, that three-headed dog back there is cute.

HERKY has been writing on a piece of cardboard. He flips it around. It reads "EXIT" with an arrow.

HERKY: Let's follow the arrow!

They start to head off. Lights shift. ANAPEST, HERKY, and ROSITA come downstage. The coatrack is brought onstage.

ANAPEST: So, we made it back to Camp Half-and-Half.

ROSITA: Casablanca and Nekkro moved into the empty Afraides cabin.

HERKY: We weren't sure what do about Monica Phoebe. How could she see through the... M word? But she was with us when these guys arrived.

BROSEIDON, CLYDESRON, LINK, SALVE, and SEUSS enter. CLYDESRON carries a bakery box.

HERKY: Lord Seuss. This is yours.

HERKY hands SEUSS the Blam.

SEUSS:

By the Phaedo of Plato you've brought back my thunder!
Returned safe and sound from the World that is Under.
Very few have come back from that dreadfully cursed place
But I still think you stole this old Blam in the first place!

HERKY: I didn't! I promise! Why would I steal it just to give it back?

BROSEIDON: That's a good point, bro. Sounds like a classic frame job to me!

ANAPEST: We did hear this evil laugh when we realized we'd been tricked.

BROSEIDON: Like in the song "Wipeout"?

SALVE: Well, you haven't changed.

BROSEIDON: Hey, Pretty Mama. Long time, no see. Can I call you sometime?

SALVE: Sure, we can talk about the years of child support you owe me.

BROSEIDON: Oh... right. Come on, bro. Drop me off in the Caribbean, I'll see if I can dive for some sunken pirate treasure.

SALVE: Great. I'll be paying next month's rent in doubloons.

CLYDESRON: Before you go, Lord Seuss, do you believe Herky?

SEUSS:

I suppose that for now, I'll believe your excuse.

Still, watch out! Quake with fear, when you think about Seuss.

SEUSS storms off, his hat bouncing comically. BROSEIDON follows him, mocking him in mime. They exit.

ROSITA: So who was laughing? And who put the Blam in Percy's backpack?

CLYDESRON: Good questions. But for now they can wait. Let's celebrate. I brought pastry. Would you like a donut or a croissant?

ANAPEST: Wait! A donut or a croissant! That's it! That laughter was Seuss's father, Cronut! He was defeated but he never really died and now he wants revenge!

An evil laugh is heard.

HERKY: I think we might be on to something.

CLYDESRON: Oh, Herky if this is true then your adventures are far from over. I think we need to consult with the Boracle again.

Everyone but HERKY and LINK start to exit.

HERKY: Oh no! I do not need to hear another story about Wavy Gravy.

LINK: Then stay here with me. Let everybody else talk to the Boracle.

Everyone else is gone.

HERKY: Thanks.

LINK: So your quest went a lot more smoothly than mine.

HERKY: It did! The Boracle said someone would betray me. But that never happened so... wisdom of the gods, right?

LINK: Like that rhying doofus is wise? Or your father the Parrothead? Or that quivering blob of Jell-O in the Underworld?

HERKY: Well, I mean... they must be... kinda wise. Right?

LINK: That's what they want you to think. The gods are just bullies, making us do their dirty work. That's why I'm helping Cronut.

HERKY: You're what?

LINK: That's why I stole the Blam.

HERKY: You stole it?

LINK: To help half-and-halves like you and me! To start a war to bring down the gods and restore Cronut to power. Join us, Herky.

HERKY: What? No!

LINK: Too bad. You could have been a powerful ally. But we can't let you be a powerful enemy, so...

LINK pulls out a hair dryer and brandishes it like a gun.

HERKY: Is that a gun?

LINK: A hairdryer. The perfect weapon to kill a water... guy like you.

LINK turns on the hairdryer and points it at HERKY. Hairdryer noises (ideally, they come from the actual hair dryer.) HERKY immediately falls to his knees.

LINK: Prepare to die, Herky Jokeson.

HERKY: I... can't... hear... you... over... the... hairdryer...

LINK: What? Oh! I said, "Prepare to die, Herky Jokeson!"

HERKY: To what?

LINK: To die!

HERKY: Today?

LINK: What? No! Well, yes. Prepare to die, today!

HERKY is near death. ANAPEST, CASABLANCA, CLYDESRON, MONICA PHOEBE, NEKKRO, and ROSITA enter.

CLYDESRON: The Boracle is coming. Apparently turning off Ravi Shankar in the middle is unacceptable, so—Link! What is going on here?

LINK: Hail Cronut!

LINK drops the hairdryer, which switches off and the sounds end, and runs off. Everyone runs to HERKY.

ANAPEST: Water! He needs water!

MONICA PHOEBE: I'll get it!

She runs off.

HERKY: Link... is the one who betrayed me. He's working with Cronut!

CLYDESRON: So the Boracle was right!

THE BORACLE enters.

BORACLE: Hey, friend. Sorry I couldn't groove with you right away, but when that sitar is soaring I just gotta let the vinyl spin.

CASABLANCA: So mainstream.

NEKKRO: I know.

CLYDESRON: Boracle, is there a new prophecy for our battle against Cronut?

BORACLE: You know, man, I have been the Boracle ever since that magical summer of 1969—did I ever tell you guys I was at Woodstock?

HERKY: Yeah! It's come up!

BORACLE: But, man, it might be time for me to pack it in. I've played my final encore and my three days of peace and music are at an end.

ANAPEST: But we need a Boracle! Who will be our new Boracle?

MONICA PHOEBE enters with a pitcher of water and a glass.

MONICA PHOEBE: I got the water!

BORACLE: How about her! Tag! You're it!

The BORACLE tags MONICA PHOEBE. She staggers back, affected. ROSITA takes the water from her and hands the glass to HERKY.

BORACLE: Half a million strong!

BORACLE collapses. CLYDESRON runs to him as HERKY gets water.

CLYDESRON: The Boracle is dead.

CASABLANCA: That was a pretty good death.

NEKKRO: I'd give it six out of ten.

CLYDESRON: Monica Phoebe, he made you the new Boracle. How do you feel?

MONICA PHOEBE: I... I feel... something is...

HERKY: Oh no! Is she going to start singing classic rock, too?

MONICA PHOEBE: No... I feel like composing a double dactyl!

ROSITA: Oh! That's one of the hardest kinds of light verse!

MONICA PHOEBE:

Boracle Smoracale
 Monica Phoebe Deere
 Bringing a prophecy
 From me to thee
 Cronut is strong but his
 Invincibility
 May be undone by
 A child of the Three

Stunned silence.

ROSITA: See, for double dactyls you need a six-syllable word that—

ANAPEST: Not now!

HERKY: Look, I never really understand poetry. What was that about?

MONICA PHOEBE: Hey, I just spit the rhymes! I don't interpret them.

CLYDESRON: If I may, I believe that prophecy means that only a child one of the Big Three gods can defeat Cronut. That means either Herky, Casablanca, Nekkro or... this coatrack here. Children, this is a terrible burden to put on someone so young, let alone a piece of furniture. Only the wisdom of the gods can help you now.

HERKY: Well we could use some godly wisdom right about now.

WHINE-ONYSUS enters.

WHINE-ONYSUS: Wisdom? Why does everybody always want wisdom?

ANAPEST: Please, wise Whine-Onysus! What should we do?

WHINE-ONYSUS: Ugh! Well, in addition to being the god of Whining, I'm also the god of theatre. And if you've worked with theatre people, you know they love whining. So my advice is... take an intermission! This play feels like it's been going on forever!

HERKY: You heard him. Take a break and come on back for act two to see if the wisdom of the gods is all it's cracked up to be.

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