

PANDEMONIUM

By JD ATKINS

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SYNOPSIS: Who killed Zeus? That is the question that private detective Minerva Oowler is trying to answer in modern day New York City. The Greek gods live incognito among the mortals, but when Zeus is murdered by one of their own, it is up to the goddess of wisdom, Minerva, to find out who is behind the betrayal. With the help of her Olympian siblings—the EMT Mercury and Sergeant Mars of the NYPD—Minerva leads the investigation, but it may already be too late. Only the world’s wisest detective stands a chance at finding the traitor in time to stop the coming of *Pandemonium*.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 females, 3-4 males, 8-16 either)

MINERVA OWLER (f).....	God of wisdom. Ex-detective and current Private Investigator. (279 lines)
ALEX (m/f).....	Minerva’s assistant. Hopes to be a detective someday. (146 lines)
SERGEANT MARS (m/f).....	God of war. A grizzled veteran with the NYPD. (112 lines)
KID MERCURY (m/f).....	Messenger god. An upbeat, sarcastic EMT. (91 lines)
BACCHUS (m).....	God of wine. A brassy socialite and party planner. (73 lines)
VENUS (f).....	God of love. Part-owner of the party planning business. (19 lines)
PERSEPHONE (f).....	Former queen of the underworld. Statuesque and cold. (48 lines)
NEPTUNE (m).....	“Johnny Neptune.” God of the sea. Professional surfer and amateur hippie. (50 lines)
DORIS (f).....	Neptune’s no-nonsense bodyguard. (38 lines)

STYX (m/f).....	The former gatekeeper to the underworld. A “Secret Service” type. (41 lines)
ARTEMIS (f).....	Agent Artemis Hunt of the FBI. She always gets her man. (22 lines)
PLUTO (m).....	Former lord of the underworld. A rich, debonair businessman. (15 lines)
ZEUS (m).....	The deceased all-father of the gods. (25 lines)
ALPHA (m/f).....	A professional criminal. (27 lines)
DELTA (m/f).....	A professional criminal. (19 lines)
GAMMA (m/f).....	A professional criminal. (11 lines)
AGENT ONE (m/f).....	Undercover FBI agent. (12 lines)
AGENT TWO (m/f).....	Undercover FBI agent. (9 lines)
AGENT THREE (m/f).....	Undercover FBI agent. (8 lines)
SECURITY GUARD (m/f).....	Museum guard. (6 lines)
VULCAN (m/f).....	Former god of the forge. (3 lines)
IRIS (f).....	Persephone’s loyal assistant. (5 lines)
FAN ONE (m/f).....	Fan of Johnny Neptune. (2 lines)
FAN TWO (m/f).....	Fan of Johnny Neptune. (2 lines)
GUEST ONE (m/f).....	Party guest at Museum Gala. (1 line)
GUEST TWO (m/f).....	Party guest at Museum Gala. (1 line)

EXTRAS:

ENSEMBLE.....	BANK SECURITY GUARD, HOSTAGES, ADDITIONAL AGENTS, LOVE DRUNK EMPLOYEES, FANS, PARTY GUESTS, SERVERS, PARAMEDICS, UNDEAD SOLDIERS. (Non-Speaking.)
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DURATION: 90 minutes**SETTING:** New York City,**TIME:** Modern Day.

OPTIONAL DOUBLING

ZEUS can double as PLUTO.

ALPHA can double as SECURITY GUARD.

IRIS can double as DELTA.

VENUS can double as GAMMA.

AGENT ONE can double as FAN ONE, GUEST ONE.

AGENT TWO can double as FAN TWO, GUEST TWO.

AGENT THREE can double as VULCAN.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES**ACT ONE**

SCENE 1: Bank.

SCENE 2: Office of Owler Inquiries.

SCENE 3: Metropolitan Museum, Gala.

SCENE 4: Bookstore.

SCENE 5: Metropolitan Museum, Gala.

ACT TWO

SCENE 1: Metropolitan Museum, Gala.

SCENE 2: Metropolitan Museum, Gates of Olympus.

SCENE 3: Office of Owler Inquiries.

SCENE 4: Metropolitan Museum, Gates of Olympus.

SCENE 5: Office of Owler Inquiries.

COSTUMES

ALL CHARACTERS: Modern clothes, both formal and casual, are most appropriate for scenes.

SPECIALTY COSTUMES:

MINERVA OWLER: Leather jacket, Dressed in “grunge,” a flannel, perhaps, with fashion tears in her jeans. She has an alternative hairstyle and is wearing sunglasses over her eyes.

ALEX: Police Academy t-shirt

SERGEANT MARS: leather bracelet

KID MERCURY: EMT jacket

DORIS, AGENT ONE, AGENT TWO, AGENT THREE: FBI jackets
STYX: distinctive jacket and sunglasses
ALPHA, DELTA, GAMMA: criminal masks
SECURITY GUARD: sunglasses
UNDEAD ARMY: black clothing

SET DESIGN

There are two doors, USL and USR, and a central archway (which can easily double as a large bay window). The various settings of the play are suggested through smaller decorations [a desk, a statue, tables and chairs] strategically placed in the foreground. Locations: Bank, Office of Owler Inquiries, Metropolitan Museum, and Bookstore.

Bank: The backroom of a bank.

Office of Owler Inquiries: A cheap, rundown New York office. There is a small desk DSR that is clean, save for a small plant on one edge and a thick binder in the middle. A second desk, USC, large and bearing the inscription “OWLER INQUIRIES,” is stacked high with untended papers and littered with empty diet soda bottles and discarded newspapers. A chair for clients is next to the desk. There is a picture of Paul on the wall, with a key behind it. One door is the entrance to the office, the other door leads to the bathroom.

Metropolitan Museum:

Gala: This space is decorated during the play for the Gala. This includes tables and chairs. Decorated with relics of Greek and Roman culture. In Act Two, yellow crime scene tape hangs around the perimeter.

Gates of Olympus: A sign proclaims that this is the Treasures of the Immortals exhibit. Statues with sheets covering them. Decorated with relics of Greek and Roman culture.

Bookstore: Bookstore with table set up for an autograph signing.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

LIGHT EFFECTS: Lighting cues can communicate god abilities.

- light behind a door and gateway
- red lights flashing for Styx's abilities

SOUND EFFECTS: Sound effects can also communicate god abilities.

- humming or ambient sound
- thunder
- phone ring
- heart monitor
- air compressor
- party music

WINE TRANSFORMATION: For Bacchus's wine transformation, nontoxic red color tablets dropped into apple juice can make an impressive "white wine to red wine" effect.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Pandemonium is, above all, a story about a family coming together. Encourage your cast to portray the familial aspects of their characters; the love found over the course of this play is the unifying thread that connects the comedy and tragedy.

PROPS

- Greek/Roman helmet
- magazines and soda bottles
- police badge, notebook, pen
- EMT bag
- champagne flutes
- trays of champagne
- trays of hors d'oeuvres
- a wristband
- tray of coffee cups
- speech (folder up piece of paper)
- 4+ phones
- notebook
- books for an autograph signing
- money
- travel bag
- 3+ handcuffs
- blankets
- sage oil
- museum artifacts
- bottles and garbage bag
- three masks (preferably dogs or wolves)
- weapons (handguns and knives)
- a key
- a portrait of Paul, Zeus, Venus, and Pluto
- sub sandwiches
- bag of kale burgers
- business cards

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Pandemonium premiered at Grafton High School in Grafton, WI with the following cast:

MINERVA OWLER	Lydia Fischer
ALEX	Zach Taylor
SERGEANT MARS	Jeff Brown / Hunter Bault
KID MERCURY	Aleezah Manzoor
BACCHUS	Nick Wilson
PERSEPHONE	Morgan Ruska
NEPTUNE	Cannon Nash
VENUS	Cassie Sohr
DORIS	Stacy Ducheny / Mikayla Fischer
STYX	Sadie Monreal
ARTEMIS HUNT	Elise Lueck
MR. PLUTO	Derek Ruona
ZEUS	Brandon Barbier
ALPHA	Aaron Kaminski
DELTA	Neala Luedtke
GAMMA	Hunter Bault
AGENT ONE	McKenna Craun
AGENT TWO	Cole Robinson
AGENT THREE	Wilson Jones
IRIS	Anna Brown
VULCAN	Cody Daniels
SECURITY GUARD	Adam Kapke

FANS & GUESTS: Ashley Fryjoff, Elijah Voss, Sam Aria, Sydney Teare, Grace Gehrke, Ruby Ellison, Hailey Bault, Greg Depmsey, Eli Feutz, Sydney Wojcik, Kaeli Mahnke, Anna Albers, Ben Koehler, Grace Hill, Ava Pederson, Mandy Perez, Josh Turner

DEDICATION

Pandemonium is a story about a family coming together; it was possible because of the support of my family, my wife, and my students in GHS Performing Arts.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT START: *Bank. Lights up on an interior, backroom. An empty stage, with a sleeping SECURITY GUARD in the corner. Offstage voices are heard. A row of HOSTAGES, including MINERVA, are being lead into the back room from SR door. They have their hands over their heads. Behind them, ALPHA, DELTA, and GAMMA, criminals in masks, lead them on.*

ALPHA: Sit down here. And don't talk.

DELTA: The sooner everyone cooperates, the sooner we all go home.

GAMMA: Where to, Alpha?

ALPHA: Back room. You're looking for safe deposit box 00194.

GAMMA: Roger. *(Exits through SL door.)*

ALPHA: Keep them here, Delta. I'll make sure we aren't disturbed.

MINERVA: You don't have to worry about that.

DELTA makes a move for MINERVA, but ALPHA stops her.

ALPHA: Why not?

MINERVA: Because you did a good job. You disconnected the silent alarm, you kept the tellers away from their panic buttons, and the hostages away from their phones. The cops aren't coming.

ALPHA: Can't be too careful, though. Search her!

DELTA pulls MINERVA to her feet and starts patting her down.

ALPHA: Pretty observant, there, lady. Are you undercover? Off-duty?

MINERVA: Retired.

DELTA: She's clean.

ALPHA: Alright—put her with the others. But keep an eye on her.

MINERVA: They must be paying you well for this job.

DELTA: Shut up.

ALPHA: Hold on—what are you talking about?

MINERVA: I'm just saying, you're holding up an entire bank and you're not stealing any cash. Whoever hired you for this job must be paying you pretty well.

ALPHA: *(Smirking.)* You have no idea.

MINERVA: Deep pockets move mountains, I suppose. So what does the man with everything need to steal, I wonder?

DELTA: None of your business, pig.

MINERVA: Something sentimental? No, something compromising.

DELTA: I said none of your business! Alpha, are you just going to let her run her mouth like this?

ALPHA: (*Watching the SL door.*) She's harmless, Delta. Let her play detective if she wants.

MINERVA: To be honest, I'm really just trying to keep things from escalating, you know? Keep everyone calm. It's my cop training, you'd be amazed how many situations you can defuse just by talking. Tell me, Delta—is it? Tell me, Delta, have you heard the one about the car?

DELTA: We're not in the mood for jokes.

MINERVA: It's really more of a riddle. My dad tells it at parties. Here it is: What's green and has wheels?

DELTA: I said, shut up! (*After a moment.*) A car?

MINERVA: (*Pleasantly.*) No!

DELTA: What? That's so stupid! (*After a moment.*) Well then, what's the answer?

MINERVA: (*Laughing.*) I have no idea! My dad never told us. Drives you crazy, right?

DELTA: Oh my god. Alpha, switch with me. I can't deal with this lady.

ALPHA: Stay focused, Delta.

MINERVA: OK—how about a story instead. Anyone know the story of Polyphemus?

ALPHA: The cyclops?

MINERVA: Hey! Yeah, exactly. See, Odysseus and his crew were trying to escape the cyclops' cave. So what do you do? You poke out his eye, right? But the cyclops, he sits himself down at the door and says he won't let anyone out.

GAMMA runs in from the other room.

ALPHA: Gamma! What's the update? Did you get into the safety deposit box?

GAMMA: I blew the lock no problem. But it was empty.

DELTA: What?

GAMMA: Empty!

MINERVA: *(Not paying attention to any of them.)* But Odysseus was smart. He knew that eventually the cyclops would have to let his giant sheep out to graze.

DELTA: Shut up! Alpha, do we abort?

GAMMA: The employer would kill us.

ALPHA: Just let me think.

MINERVA: So Odysseus and his soldiers held onto the bellies of the sheep, and that's how they escaped! Genius, right?

DELTA: I said shut up.

DELTA pulls MINERVA to her feet and marches her DS. DELTA points his gun at MINERVA (this is the first time a gun is pointed.) MINERVA puts her hands above her head. The other HOSTAGES scream.

GAMMA: Delta, what are you doing? Leave her alone!

MINERVA: Don't you want to hear the moral of the story?

DELTA: Go ahead.

MINERVA: See, most people think the takeaway is there's no situation you can't think your way out of. But I interpret a different lesson.

DELTA: Which is?

MINERVA: *(Smiling.)* If you're going to herd sheep, be sure to check their bellies.

Suddenly, ALL HOSTAGES reveal themselves to be undercover FBI AGENTS by lifting up their shirts to show weapons that have been hidden, tucked into their waistlines. ALL AGENTS draw the weapons suddenly and through a series of specialized moves, disarm and subdue ALPHA, DELTA, and GAMMA.

GAMMA: What is this?

AGENT ONE: FBI! Down on the ground!

AGENT TWO: Drop your weapons!

AGENT THREE: We have you surrounded!

ALPHA: Whoa, whoa! Don't shoot—you've got us.

DELTA: Alpha!

ALPHA: Stand down, you two. We'll come quietly.

AGENT ONE: Alright. Get them up.

Other AGENTS pull ALPHA, GAMMA, and DELTA US to search them and put them in handcuffs. ARTEMIS enters.

MINERVA: *(Brushing herself off.)* Well that was exciting.

AGENT TWO: That was quite a risk you took.

AGENT THREE: Are you alright?

ARTEMIS: Stand down, Agents. It'd take more than that to fluster Minerva Owler.

AGENT ONE: Yes, ma'am! Oh, Miss Owler, this is Special Agent—

MINERVA: Artemis Hunt.

AGENT TWO: You two know each other?

ARTEMIS: *(With a smirk.)* In passing. Someone wants to give a report here?

AGENT THREE: Yes, ma'am. Operation was a total success—no casualties.

ARTEMIS: *(ARTEMIS shakes MINERVA'S hand.)* I can't thank you enough for tipping us off. These three have been linked to a number of high profile robberies in the past few years. Getting them is a big deal for my department.

MINERVA: Anything for the Feds.

AGENT THREE: This "undercover hostage" routine was a real winner. How did you come up with that, anyway?

MINERVA: Didn't you listen to my story? *(Putting on jacket, turning to ARTEMIS.)* It's late, and I have to get up for work tomorrow. Can I go?

ARTEMIS: Officially, you were never here.

MINERVA: As per usual.

As MINERVA exits, she gives a smile to DELTA, who shakes her head in disgust. DELTA and GAMMA are dragged off SR.

ARTEMIS: The offer still stands, by the way! I think you would make a great federal agent.

MINERVA: *(Shrugging.)* I made a great cop, too. But I'm done with all that. See ya, Cuz.

ARTEMIS: See ya.

MINERVA exits.

AGENT THREE: *(Interested.)* Agent Hunt, is she your cousin?

ARTEMIS: More or less.

AGENT THREE: She's a little funny, isn't she? No offense, ma'am.

ARTEMIS: *(Wryly.)* You should meet the rest of my family. Alright everyone, let's move out. Take them around back.

AGENT TWO: Yes, ma'am.

ARTEMIS exits SR. ALL AGENTS start moving ALPHA, GAMMA, and DELTA.

AGENT ONE: Alright, Alpha. Let's get you to lock up.

ALPHA: I want my phone call.

AGENT ONE: When we get there.

STYX, a Secret Service type, enters through the back door SL.

STYX: I'll take it from here, thank you.

AGENT ONE: Whoa—back it up. Where did you come from?

AGENT TWO: Who are you?

STYX: Legal counsel. Now if you don't mind, my client and I will leave.

STYX removes her sunglasses, slowly.

AGENT ONE: Listen, pal, we need to get your client processed before anyone—

STYX opens her eyes. SFX: a low tone and a flicker of the lights.

AGENT ONE: ...anyone... anyone.... What was I saying?

STYX: You were about to turn over my client.

AGENT TWO: *(Suddenly dazed.)* Oh... right. *(Removing handcuffs.)*
Here you go.

STYX: Thank you.

STYX grabs ALPHA by the shoulder and leads her to the door.

ALPHA: Listen, Styx, about the job—

STYX: We'll talk later, Alpha. (*Answers cell phone.*) Hello? No, it wasn't here. (*Beat.*) I understand. Move it, Alpha. Pandemonium will proceed on schedule.

ALPHA and STYX exit.

AGENT ONE: (*Dazed, looking around.*) What were we doing here again?

ALL AGENTS are dumbfounded as well. Dazed, they wander offstage. Lights shift.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT START: *Office of Owler Inquiries. Lights up, ALEX is hurriedly attempting to tidy up the bottles and put them in a garbage bag. He is clearly frustrated with the dilapidated state of the office. SFX: the phone rings; ALEX runs over to answer it.*

ALEX: Owler Inquiries... oh, how can I help, Officer? (*Pause.*) No, I'm sorry, Miss Owler isn't in yet. I can deliver a message—(*Beat.*)—uh, just off of 22nd street, building 114. The name on the buzzer is Minerva Owler. (*Beat.*) OK, see you then.

MINERVA enters, looking run-down. She is dressed in "grunge," a flannel, perhaps, with fashion tears in her jeans. She has an alternative hairstyle and is wearing sunglasses over her eyes. She has a diet soda in one hand and a rolled magazine in the other.

MINERVA: Morning Alex.

ALEX: (*Straightening up.*) Good morning, Miss Owler. Well, uh... (*Checking his watch.*) ...good afternoon, I suppose.

MINERVA: (*Feigning frustration.*) Ah, shoot. How close was I today?

ALEX: I mean... it's 1:30 so... not that close.

MINERVA: How you manage to get here every morning is beyond me.

ALEX: I wake up before 11:30.

MINERVA: I had a busy night. Didn't get to sleep until after 3.

ALEX: Partying hard, I suppose?

MINERVA: You know me. Anyway, let's get going.

ALEX shuffles around and picks up a notepad and pen.

ALEX: You've had about a half dozen calls... all potential clients for Owlter Inquiries.

MINERVA: *(Sitting on her desk.)* Anything interesting?

ALEX: Well that would be up to you.... *(Riffling around.)* First is a carjacking down on tenth... the cops have no leads so they sent it our way.

MINERVA: Pass.

ALEX: Absolutely. I thought that might be a little dull. OK, next... there's a doctor in Midtown who wants to find her adoptive parents. She's offering a lot of money.

MINERVA: *(Considers this for a moment.)* Pass. Next?

ALEX: OK.... *(About to flip the page, hesitates.)* You heard what I said about the money, right? I can give you the specifics.

MINERVA: Moving on, Alex.

ALEX: Yes, ma'am. *(Flips the page and seems excited.)* Oh! The next call I have for you is—I think you're going to be interested. *(With a storyteller's drama.)* A married couple in Brooklyn thinks that someone is spying on them. Now, my theory is—

MINERVA: Are they dentists?

ALEX: Uh, let me check... *(Amazed.)* Wow. Yeah, they are!

MINERVA: Pass.

ALEX: Wait, Miss Owlter—how did you know—

MINERVA: Pass, Alex. Hard pass.

ALEX: *(Indignant.)* I didn't even tell you how much they're offering.

MINERVA: Alex, I know this is only your second week here, but I was hoping by now you would understand that when I say pass, I mean pass!

ALEX: *(Gently closes the notepad.)* Miss Owlter, I don't mean to question your judgement, but since you hired me to be your partner—

MINERVA: Assistant.

ALEX: Right. Well since you hired me, you have yet to take on a single case. What sort of a business is this if you don't take any clients?

MINERVA: (*Digging in the drawer.*) First of all—it's not your job to worry about what cases I do and do not take. Second of all, I only take interesting clients, and lately, none of them are worth my time.

ALEX: I think you might be too picky, ma'am. How will you clear expenses without a revenue?

MINERVA: What expenses?

ALEX: Well you have to pay rent, I assume. There's utilities, office supplies, not to mention all the diet soda you drink. Oh, and my salary of course. (*A sudden look of concern.*) Wait... you are going to pay me for this job, right?

MINERVA: Alex.

ALEX: (*Aghast, to himself.*) How have we never discussed me getting paid?

MINERVA: Alex!

ALEX: Yes, ma'am.

MINERVA: Is there more to this lecture?

ALEX: (*Recomposing.*) Yes, ma'am. When I applied to work for a Private Investigator, I expected there would be at least a little excitement; some experience I could use when I apply for the Police Academy. But so far all I've done is sit at a phone and told people, who need help, to go away.

MINERVA: A valuable skill for any young man to learn.

ALEX: (*Sarcastic.*) Ha-ha. You know, when I told my dad who I was going to work for he was over the moon. According to him, you were the most talented rookie to ever come through the Academy. He said you made Detective faster than anyone he ever trained.

MINERVA: Oh yeah?

ALEX: He told me the day you gave up the badge was a sad day for New York. (*MINERVA laughs at this.*) Well, laugh if you want; but I'm still hoping I get to see you in action.

MINERVA: Action is overrated, Alex. Trust me on that one.

ALEX: Whatever you say, ma'am.

MINERVA leans back in her chair and gingerly places a magazine over her face.

MINERVA: Any other calls I should be aware of? Or am I safe to start my nap?

ALEX: No... oh, wait, yes. We did get a call from NYPD. A sergeant called ahead to say he would be stopping by to see you.

MINERVA: Why?

ALEX: I assume to offer you another case that you'll immediately turn down. I told him he could just call back, but he insisted on coming over.

SERGEANT MARS, a middle-aged Police Officer, enters the office.

MINERVA: What was the Sergeant's name?

MARS: Mars.

ALEX jumps at the voice and nearly falls out of his chair, then stands to attention. MINERVA grabs the magazine from off of her face and sits up slowly. She does not look pleased.

MARS: Sorry, kid. Didn't mean to scare you.

ALEX: Uh, Ms. Owler, I assume this would be Sergeant Mars of the New York—

MINERVA: Who let you in here?

MARS: Nice to see you too, Minnie.

MINERVA: Don't call me that. *(Jumps up from her desk and assumes an aggressive posture.)* I asked you how you got in here. I keep the front door locked.

ALEX: You do? But then how are potential customers supposed to... *(Realizing.)* Ohhhhhh.

MINERVA: Answer the question, Mars.

MARS: Relax, you're going to scare the kid. *(Points to ALEX.)* Aren't you even going to introduce me?

MINERVA: Alex, meet Sergeant Mars. Sergeant Mars, don't break into my office and tell me to relax. I'll ask you again: Who let you in here?

MARS: *(Sighing.)* Kid. Kid let me in.

ALEX: What? No I didn't.

MARS: *(Waving ALEX off, pointing over his shoulder.)* Not you, kid. Her Kid.

SFX: portal opening. Behind ALEX a sound emanates and a light behind the bathroom door illuminates. KID, wearing an EMT jacket and hat, emerges.

KID: Hi.

ALEX jumps and falls over from fear. KID laughs and reaches to help ALEX up.

KID: I'm Kid Mercury. You OK? If I gave you a heart attack I know how to help.

ALEX: *(Refusing KID'S hand, retreating over to MINERVA.)* Ms. Oowler, I swear I did not let these people in. *(Pointing at KID.)* How did she get in there? I haven't left my desk since I got here! ...Have you been hiding in the bathroom all morning? *(Rushes over to check in the bathroom.)*

KID: Hey! I haven't disconnected the portal yet—*(Unable to stop ALEX.)* Uh oh.

As soon as ALEX crosses the threshold, SFX: a mystical warp/whoosh sound, followed by the sounds of a heart monitor and air compressor. A woman shrieks.

ALEX: Sorry! *(Comes back into the room and closes the door behind him. In shock.)* Our bathroom is a hospital.

MINERVA: *(Aggravated.)* Kid, would you please disconnect your portal?

KID: Sorry.

KID runs over and knocks on the door three times. The portal closes. The sound of the heart monitor and air compressor ceases and the lights now appear normal.

KID: There. All fixed.

ALEX: Why is our bathroom a hospital?

KID: It's not.

ALEX: The hell it isn't! I just saw! (*Runs in again to inspect the bathroom, which by the light has now returned to normal. From offstage.*) What?!

MARS: (*Amused.*) Who is this kid?

KID: How should I know?

MARS: No; I meant who is this young man, Minnie?

MINERVA: I said don't call me that!

ALEX reappears, looking shocked.

MINERVA: Alex, relax. Everything is OK. Just come sit down over here.

ALEX: How did you do that? That was a hospital room.

KID: Well now it's a bathroom again. Ta-da!

MARS: (*Pushier now.*) Who's the mortal, Minerva?

ALEX: I'm her partner. Wait, what do you mean mortal?

MINERVA: He's my assistant. And would you cool it? (*Significantly.*) He doesn't know.

MARS: Well if you don't want him to know, better get rid of him now.

MINERVA: Oh yeah, fat lot of good that will do now after Kid's grand entrance. Just once, Kid, couldn't you have come over in a taxi like a normal person?

KID: My hospital is all the way across town.

MARS: Minerva, we have something important to tell you.

MINERVA: I don't want to hear it.

MARS: Minnie, please—

MINERVA: (*Finally blowing up.*) I told you not to call me that!

A silence falls, and ALL regard one another cautiously. MINERVA's outburst seems to have rattled something. MINERVA closes her eyes and puts a hand to her temple.

MARS: (*Sighs.*) Well, this is off to a fantastic start. I suppose it was foolish of me to come over and think we could just pick up where we left off, but part of me was hoping you would at least be a little glad to see us after all this time.

MINERVA: I'm thrilled.

ALEX: Miss Owler... (*MINERVA does not respond, but ALEX is persistent.*) Miss Owler? Who are these people?

MARS: Can he be trusted?

MINERVA: His father was our training officer at the Police Academy.

MARS: You're Homer's kid? Well then in that case, what are you waiting for? Just tell him!

MINERVA: Fine. (*Turns to face ALEX.*) You want to be a detective like me, Alex? Then have a guess. You've spent two weeks with me, you heard our conversation and you've seen what Kid can do. What would you say we are?

ALEX: (*Thinking about it.*) OK... she has supernatural powers... you're all talking like you belong to a secret organization... and Sergeant Mars said your "kind" are different than I am. (*Something dawns on him.*) Your names... you introduced yourself as Kid Mercury. You... Sergeant Mars. And you're... Minerva. Oh, man. There's no way.

MINERVA: That's right, Alex. We're all—

MINERVA: (*Simultaneously with ALEX.*) —gods.

ALEX: (*Simultaneously with MINERVA.*) —wizards.

ALEX: (*Continued.*) Gods. Right, that's exactly what I was thinking.

KID: (*Highly amused.*) Did he just say wizards?

ALEX: Wait, what do you mean "gods?"

MINERVA: We're the classical pantheon, dummy; the gods of Olympus that you learned about in school. Sergeant Mars is the god of war, Kid Mercury is the messenger god. I'm Minerva, you may have guessed, god of wisdom.

ALEX immediately laughs, but seeing that MINERVA is not kidding, looks around to MARS and KID, who nod and confirm what MINERVA is saying.

ALEX: You're joking, right? There's no way! (*Confident, almost laughing.*) Ms. Owler, I'm not that gullible. The gods of Olympus are a myth.

MINERVA: Oh, but Harry Potter is real? Go stand in the corner.

MINERVA begins shoving ALEX back toward his desk.

ALEX: You would all have to be thousands of years old!

MINERVA: Enough. Stand over there and don't talk. I need to speak with my family.

ALEX: You seriously expect me to believe that my boss for the past two weeks is a god? A god who drinks diet soda and wears hi-top sneakers.

MINERVA: Mars, will you please help me with this?

ALEX: Oh! Yes, god of war, meet me on the field of battle. You know, it's OK if you don't want to tell me what's going on, Miss Owlser, but don't insult my intelligence by telling me some crackpot—

MARS: *(A la drill instructor.)* Attention!

ALEX: *Salutate Generalis!* *(Leaps to attention, then covers his mouth reflexively and looks from person to person. Meekly.)* Did I just speak Latin?

MARS: Soldier: march!

ALEX: *Etiam, Generalis!* *(Begins marching a high step. Points confusedly at his legs.)* I'm not doing that.

MARS: Move out!

ALEX: Ahhh! *(Shouts as his legs seem to carry him away.)* What's happening? Where am I going? Miss Owlser!

MINERVA: Bye, Alex.

KID: Tell him to get us coffee.

MARS: Get us coffee, soldier!

ALEX: *Etiam, Generalis!* *(Exits.)*

KID: I like that guy. He's funny.

MINERVA: He's not going to walk into traffic, is he?

MARS: He'll be fine. Listen... about why we came over.

MINERVA: It must be pretty important if you decided to break a silence of five years.

KID: Minerva... Zeus is dead.

This stops MINERVA in her tracks.

MINERVA: What?

KID: Zeus—Dad—he died late last night.

MINERVA: Zeus is... dead? *(Processing.)* Are you sure?

KID: *(Tugging on his jacket.)* EMT, remember? I was on the scene.

MARS: I was there too. It was Dad... and he was gone.

MINERVA: *(In shock.)* I don't believe this.... It's not possible.

KID: Of course it's possible. We all knew this was a possibility when we decided to cross over into the mortal world.

MARS: Human bodies means human problems, Minerva.

MINERVA: I know, Mars.

MARS: Up to and including mortality.

MINERVA: I know, Mars. *(Stares MARS down.)* I know exactly how vulnerable we are. I will never forget it.

MARS: *(Backtracking.)* Fair enough. Look, Minerva, I didn't come here to drag up ancient history. I just figured, you aren't as "in the know" as you used to be, and someone ought to tell you what happened.

MINERVA: *(Smirks.)* That's not why you came here. You're here because Dad was murdered.

MARS and KID share a look.

KID: Neither of us said anything about murder.

MINERVA: Oh, please. I smelled it on you the minute you walked in the door. It couldn't have been more obvious.

MARS: Oh no?

MINERVA: *(Scoffs.)* You could have called, you could have texted, but no, you took the trouble to come all the way uptown for a face to face. That means you want something from me. And you brought Kid with you, so whatever you want must be really important. It's harder for me to turn her down because she's a lot nicer than you are.

MARS: Thanks.

KID: Thanks!

MINERVA: You've also been clutching your notebook since you walked in the door, Mars. You only did that when you had a case you couldn't solve. Zeus's death was a murder, and you want my help to solve it. Am I right?

KID: *(Smiling.)* I think she's onto us, Mars.

MARS: Fine. You caught me.

MINERVA: Well you can forget it. *(Crosses to get her jacket.)*

KID: Wait... just like that? You're out?

MINERVA: I'm a P.I. now, Kid. I'll leave homicide to the real detectives.

MARS: You were the best detective we ever had. You're the best detective on earth!

MINERVA: That is true.

KID: You can't keep blaming yourself for what happened back then; at some point you have to get back in the game.

MINERVA: That is not true.

KID: Minerva, there's more to this. Mars wasn't done telling you—

MINERVA: Don't care!

MARS: Minerva—

MINERVA: Goodbye, Mars.

MARS: (*Forcefully.*) Minerva the murderer is one of us. (*This stops MINERVA. Continuing slowly.*) Think about it. Dad was as secretive as it gets. So far as anyone knew, he was just a humble, doddering old museum curator. The only enemies he had were—

MINERVA: Gods.

MARS: Gods.

Both KID and MARS look to MINERVA expectantly.

MARS: So.

MINERVA: So?

MARS: So what's our next move?

MINERVA contemplates this for a moment, hanging between two courses of action. Ultimately she shakes her head.

MINERVA: No. I can't. I'm sorry, but I can't go through this again.

MARS: Minerva—

MINERVA: Good luck, Mars.

MARS: Minerva, please! This won't be like last time.

MINERVA: (*Sadly.*) You're right. I won't be involved. Goodbye. (*Exits.*)

KID: What now?

MARS: I don't know. I honestly don't know. (*Pointing.*) Coffee's here.

At this moment, ALEX enters, holding a tray of coffee, still marching.

KID: How'd it go?

ALEX: This was really hard to explain to the barista. Can I stop now, please?

MARS: At ease, soldier.

ALEX: (*Stops, sits, and starts rubbing his legs.*) How did you do that? Get me to speak Latin? Go to the coffee shop?

MARS rolls up his sleeve and reveals a leather bracelet.

MARS: See this wristband? It's a sacred artifact from Olympus. It guarantees my combat orders are never disobeyed.

ALEX: (*Examining the wristband.*) That's incredible. Do you have an artifact, too, Kid?

KID: We all have one. The artifacts are our last connection to who we were as gods.

MARS: Here. (*Helps ALEX to his feet.*) Sorry about the marching orders, but it seemed like the easiest way to prove we weren't lying.

ALEX: You really are them. The gods.

MARS: The twelve Olympians, right here in good old New York. Pretty cool, right?

ALEX: Well it's... unbelievable. I've been working for the actual goddess of wisdom. (*Suddenly remembering.*) Was Miss Owlser alright? I bumped into her on the stairs, and she looked upset.

KID: She's—processing. We had to deliver some pretty bad news.

MARS: Our father was found dead this morning.

ALEX: Oh no... I'm sorry. Truly, I am.

MARS: Thank you. We were hoping to get Minerva to help us find out what happened to him, but I guess it was too much to ask.

ALEX: Really? Because she told me said she was off somewhere to work on a case—

MARS: —What? Did she say where she was going?

ALEX: (*Rolling his eyes.*) Of course not. She gave me a vague and meaningless answer as usual. I asked where she was going and she said to see the Treasures of the Immortals.

MARS: What did you say?

ALEX: Treasures of the Immortals.

MARS: Kid—that's the name of Dad's wing!

KID: (*Jubilant.*) I knew she wouldn't let us down!

ALEX: I'm confused. Where is she going?

KID: Treasures of the Immortals is the exhibit our father curated at the museum!

MARS: It's also where he was found dead this morning. It means she's taken the case after all.

KID: (*Dancing around, singing.*) She's on the case. She's on the case. Wait. So what do we do, Mars?

MARS: One of us should go help her. She won't get past our police barricade without an escort.

KID: Here.

KID walks over to the bathroom door and knocks on it again. SFX: portal opening. A sound emanates and a light behind the door illuminates.

KID: You go. Maybe the two of you can work the old police magic.

MARS: Thanks. Where will you go?

KID: Well... we both know there's more family that hasn't heard the news about Dad.

MARS: Oh. (*Meaningful.*) Good luck with that.

The door shuts behind MARS. The portal closes. The sound ceases, the light appears normal behind the door. ALEX walks back over to the door and examines it again.

ALEX: I don't think I will ever get used to that. I suppose that's your messenger god power?

KID: The caduceus. (*Points to the back of her jacket.*) When I'm wearing it, all doors are open to me. Basically, all I have to do is knock, and I can make portals to wherever I want.

ALEX: That's incredible. Hey, you said all the gods have a power?

KID: Yeah. Zeus let us keep one power when we crossed over and became mortal. Mars has his bracelet, I have my doors...

ALEX: Well what about Ms. Owl? I've never seen her use a power. Does she have an artifact too?

KID: Yeah. The helm of wisdom.

ALEX: I've never seen a helmet.

KID: She... (*Hesitant.*) she gave it up. Years ago. It's sort of a long story. Anyway... I should get going. I still have a few more of the family to inform. (*Gets to the door, but turns back.*) You wouldn't want to come with, would you?

ALEX: Me? Sure! I mean, yes, I would love to meet some of the other gods.

KID: Well then let's go!

KID knocks on the door. SFX: portal opening. A sound emanates and a light behind the door illuminates. Then KID nods to ALEX. ALEX and KID exit through the portal. Lights fade to black.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

AT START: *Metropolitan Museum. Lights up on the interior, decorated with relics of Greek and Roman culture. A sign proclaims that this is the Treasures of the Immortals exhibit. VENUS and BACCHUS are walking this way and that, pointing and helping to rearrange the Greek and Roman art, directing the LOVE DRUNK EMPLOYEES. A SECURITY GUARD, wearing sunglasses, is at the door denying entry. MINERVA enters wearing sunglasses.*

SECURITY GUARD: Sorry, ma'am. This wing is closed for a private event. Can't let you in without an ID badge.

MINERVA: (*Removing Sunglasses.*) What are you talking about? This is a crime scene.

SECURITY GUARD: OK, then I can't let you in without a police badge.

MINERVA: Your boss told me to meet him here.

SECURITY GUARD: (*Looking MINERVA over.*) Nice try, but you aren't really his type.

MINERVA knocks SECURITY GUARD'S hand away and grabs him by the collar.

MINERVA: Touch me again and you'll see exactly what type I am.

VENUS: (*Walks over, drink in hand.*) Alright, let's all calm down. It's OK, she's family.

MINERVA: (*Cold.*) Hello, Venus.

VENUS: Hello, Cousin! It's been, what, five years?

MINERVA: Yeah, thereabouts. Hello, Bacchus.

BACCHUS: Cousin! I can't believe it. Last time I saw you, you were in a much cuter outfit.

MINERVA: It was a police uniform.

BACCHUS: Well it was a darling blue.

MINERVA: Last time I saw you, you were knee deep in champagne and caviar. No offense, but what are you two doing in a museum?

VENUS: Haven't you heard? Cousin Bacchus and I started a business together.

MINERVA: Oh, really. And what sort of business did the god of love and the god of wine create?

BACCHUS: Event planning! Our company hosts the best soirees in New York. Here's a card. (*Hands MINERVA a business card.*)

MINERVA: "The Love Drunk Party Company." That sounds like a Beyoncé cover band.

BACCHUS: (*Oblivious to the insult.*) Thank you. Anyway, that's why I find myself here of all places. Our company was asked to plan the museum gala! It's tonight. So much to do.

MINERVA: A gala? Here?

VENUS: That's right.

MINERVA: Then I guess you haven't heard the news, yet.

VENUS: About Zeus? Of course I did. Why do you think I'm so distraught?

MINERVA: I didn't know you two were that close.

VENUS: We weren't. But now I have to replan the entire event so that it will reflect Zeus's achievements and honor his memory! Can you believe it? The nerve.

MINERVA: Yeah... it was real inconsiderate of him to drop dead like that.

VENUS: Exactly. But we soldier on. As Bacchus always says,

VENUS and BACCHUS: "The party stops for no one." (*Giggle.*)

MINERVA: That sounds exhausting.

VENUS: We manage. I think it's what Zeus would have wanted.

MINERVA: You two are aware, I suppose, that Zeus's body was found in this very room?

VENUS: Yes.

MINERVA: And you had access to this wing of the museum last night, I presume. You know, for planning purposes.

VENUS: Me and a dozen people that work for me, sweetie. Hold on... don't tell me you're investigating this. (*MINERVA shrugs.*) Well, well, well. Detective Owlter is at it again. I'll try not to get in your way.

MINERVA: To be honest, I'm surprised you two are here at all. Shouldn't this be a crime scene?

BACCHUS: Probably. Our employer got the cops to speed things along.

MINERVA: Your employer...?

PERSEPHONE and IRIS enter.

PERSEPHONE: The Cerberus Corporation. (*Takes the room.*) How are things going with the modifications, Venus?

VENUS: Well, I'm doing my best, Persephone, but I'm not a miracle worker. Oh, who am I kidding, yes I am. We'll be fine.

MINERVA: Persephone. I should have known. Who better to plan a funeral than the queen of the underworld?

PERSEPHONE: Ex-queen. But yes, it seemed only natural that we handle the details of Zeus's memorial.

IRIS: That will be all for now, Miss Venus.

VENUS: But we're nowhere near finished—

PERSEPHONE: Venus. Bacchus.

BACCHUS: Oh, fine. We can work on the foyer I suppose. Love Drunks, (*Claps.*) heel!

Exit VENUS, with LOVE DRUNK EMPLOYEES. BACCHUS boogies out behind them.

MINERVA: Did he just call his employees the "Love Drunks?"

PERSEPHONE: Yes, he did. (*To IRIS.*) Go see that they don't make a mess of the place, please. Can I offer you a drink, Minerva?

MINERVA: No, thanks. It's a little early for that.

PERSEPHONE: Right. I rather lost track of time, I'm afraid. We've been up all night with grief.

MINERVA: We?

PERSEPHONE: My beloved husband and me, of course.

MINERVA: Oh, of course. How is Uncle Pluto, these days? Missing the underworld?

PERSEPHONE: Not especially. We've traded dominion over hell for dominion over Manhattan.

MINERVA: Yeah, I suppose that's pretty much the same thing.

PERSEPHONE: Cerberus has become the most successful private security company in the world. But you already knew that. You also knew that I had access to the museum last night because our employees are guards here. And you know that my husband and I were not on the best of terms with his dear departed brother.

MINERVA: I did?

PERSEPHONE: Of course you did.

MINERVA: You give me too much credit, Persephone. I gave up being the goddess of wisdom a long time ago.

PERSEPHONE: *(Laugh.)* As much as you could ever give up your godly powers, dear girl, you're still the greatest detective in NYPD history.

MINERVA: Yeah, well, I gave that up too.

PERSEPHONE: I know. But this is your father we're talking about, so why don't we skip to the part where you ask me what you really want.

MINERVA: Fine. Where were you last night?

PERSEPHONE: Minerva, the police haven't even announced a cause of death. How can you be sure it was foul play?

MINERVA: I'm not... but this was a potential crime scene, and now it's been scrubbed remarkably fast. Oh, but I'm sure you only decided to force my father's wake onto this museum gala because...

PERSEPHONE: *(Defensive.)* Because the museum was Zeus's life. This exhibit was his life's work. It seemed a fitting tribute.

MINERVA: Where were you last night?

PERSEPHONE: Darling, you're not the police, you said so yourself. As far as I'm concerned, I don't have to tell you anything.

MINERVA: No, but if you have nothing to hide—

PERSEPHONE: Not wanting to talk to you does not mean I'm hiding something. It just means that I don't want to waste my time with our family's biggest bore. (*Appraising MINERVA'S appearance.*) You know, seeing you like this, seeing what has become of you... it makes you wonder why Zeus ever brought us here.

MINERVA: Yeah, well, when I figure it out, I'll tell you.

IRIS: Ma'am, you're needed in the lobby, and your husband is on line one.

PERSEPHONE: If you'll excuse me, I've got a wake to plan. (*Begins to walk away.*) Security!

SECURITY GUARD comes forward to grab MINERVA away.

MINERVA: I'm glad to see that Pluto finally came to his senses and started treating you like an equal. The Cerberus Corporation was your idea, wasn't it? And now he's promoted you from housewife to party planner.

PERSEPHONE: (*Cutting as deep as she can.*) I know it's short notice, but the whole family is invited to come tonight. Could you do me a favor and tell Paul—oh, that's right.

PERSEPHONE and IRIS exit SL. MINERVA is outraged and attempts to wrestle away from the SECURITY GUARD to attack PERSEPHONE. MINERVA subdues, SECURITY GUARD, but MARS runs in and intervenes before MINERVA can get away.

MARS: Hey, hey, hey! Settle it down.

MINERVA: I'm going to kill her!

MARS: Calm down, Minerva! Paul would never want you to—

MINERVA: Don't say his name!

A moment passes, and MINERVA sees that she has hurt MARS.

MINERVA: I'm sorry.

MARS: I was close with him, too, Minerva.

MINERVA: I know.

MARS: I served with him just as much—

MINERVA: I know! I'm sorry, OK? I didn't mean to snap at you.

MARS: Fine. What did you find out?

MINERVA: There's a museum gala tonight sponsored by the Cerberus Corporation. They're holding it here, and apparently they've decided to go ahead with it despite the fact that the curator was murdered.

MARS: It's not officially a murder yet, Minerva. Autopsy hasn't come back.

MINERVA: We both know it was. Pluto always hated Dad, even in the old days. And now he's effectively scrubbed the crime scene by throwing a party.

MARS: Are you saying you suspect Pluto?

MINERVA: Wouldn't you?

MARS: Yes! I would! For Pete's sake, his god artifact is literally a poison chalice; of course I suspect him! Listen, Minerva—you're just repeating stuff I already knew. And you would have known it too if you had agreed to be my partner on this!

MINERVA: *(Dismissive.)* I don't need a partner. And I don't need you to tell me how to be a detective. *(Begins to exit.)*

MARS: Evidently, you do. You're acting like a rookie. Hey! Where are you going?

MINERVA: What do you mean? I have a gala to attend.

MINERVA and MARS exit. SECURITY GUARD walks forward. Enter STYX, who crosses to meet SECURITY GUARD.

STYX: Report.

SECURITY GUARD: She came here just like you said.

STYX: Did you let her snoop around?

SECURITY GUARD: Yes, ma'am.

STYX: Good. Here's your money. *(Hands off money.)* Oh, one more thing.

STYX removes SECURITY GUARD'S sunglasses, SFX: low tone emanates and light flickers.

STYX: *(Using powers.)* I was never here.

SECURITY GUARD: *(Rubbing his temples, squinting.)* What are you... huh?

SECURITY GUARD exits, dazed, while STYX pulls out her phone.

STYX: This is Styx... everything is according to plan. Very well, master. We will begin phase two.

Blackout.

ACT ONE, SCENE 4

AT START: *Bookstore. Lights up on the interior, set up for an autograph signing. At a table SL, NEPTUNE is signing autographs with his FANS. DORIS stands off to the side watching.*

FAN ONE: Make it out to Helen.

NEPTUNE: You got it, compadre.

NEPTUNE signs, then hands the autograph book to FAN TWO.

FAN TWO: Thank you so much. We love you.

FAN ONE and FAN TWO cross DS.

FAN ONE: What does it say? What did he write?

FAN TWO: *(Checks inscription.)* "Make it out to Helen."

FAN ONE and FAN TWO share a disappointed look and exit, while other FANS continue getting their books inscribed. Enter KID and ALEX through the SR door, chased by VULCAN.

VULCAN: And stay out, Mercury! I never want to see your face in my forge ever again! As for you—*(Suddenly pleasant.)* it was a pleasure to meet you. Come back any time.

VULCAN gives KID the evil eye, and exits. ALEX and KID recompose and get in line.

ALEX: Hasn't your family heard that thing about not shooting the messenger?

KID: I coined that phrase. Hasn't helped.

ALEX: I have to say, this has been one of the craziest days of my life.

KID: I bet! In one morning we've been to Tokyo, Peru, Kenya...

ALEX: You forgot Arizona. [Or insert other state.]

KID: I didn't forget, it just makes the list sound less impressive. Anyway, how are you feeling about it all?

ALEX: A little shaken up to be honest. You realize you're all basically superheroes, right?

KID: Yeah. It's pretty great.

ALEX: Only, if it were me, I wouldn't hide. Being an EMT is good and all, but if I could do what you can do I think I'd be shouting from the rooftops.

KID: (*Thoughtfully.*) Well... we did that, once upon a time. Gods on high, the shining Olympians, we shall make our countenance to shine down upon you, blah blah blah.

ALEX: Ancient Greece.

KID: And Rome. Back then, we only cared about ourselves. But when we crossed over this time, Zeus made it clear that our new purpose was to use our abilities to help people.

ALEX: (*Understanding.*) Which is why so many of you became public servants.

KID: Exactly. We're trying to do better this time around. Although some of us took Zeus's mission a little more seriously than others. Speaking of...

ALEX: Yeah, where are we, anyway? What are we waiting in line for?

KID: Our last stop is my Uncle Neptune.

ALEX: Ah, the god of the sea. He's one of the big three: Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus.

KID: (*Sarcastic.*) Thanks, Percy Jackson. I didn't know that about my dad and uncles.

ALEX: Sorry.

KID: Just try to keep your cool when we meet him, OK? Like I said, some of the family didn't take that whole "low-profile" thing to heart.

ALEX: What's that supposed to mean? Is he famous or something?

They have arrived at the front of the line. ALEX catches a glimpse of NEPTUNE.

ALEX: Oh my god it's Johnny Neptune!! Your uncle is Johnny Neptune?!

KID: Keep it together.

ALEX: He's the greatest professional surfer in the world. Your uncle is the greatest professional surfer in the world. I had a poster of him on my wall when I was twelve! Wait, the god of the sea is a professional surfer? That seems like cheating. Is that cheating? You know what? I don't care. I have to meet him and get him to autograph my arm. Excuse me, Mr. Neptune!

ALEX runs forward and is accosted by DORIS. ALEX is surprised as DORIS easily puts him into a submission hold.

DORIS: Whoa, whoa, whoa! I did NOT tell you to approach!

ALEX: GAH! (*In pain.*) Ow. Ow. Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow.

DORIS: Hands out, buddy. Let me see those hands.

ALEX: Two hands!

KID: I tried to warn you.

DORIS: (*Noticing KID.*) Kid? Is that you?

KID: Hi, Doris! Long time no see.

DORIS: No kidding! How's everything at the hospital? Is Dr. Manvi still around?

KID: No, she took a job at County a few months back.

ALEX: Hey! Did you two forget something?

KID: Oh yeah! Where are my manners? Alex, this is Doris, Neptune's longtime bodyguard.

DORIS: What's up?

ALEX: Hey.

NEPTUNE spots KID and ALEX as the last FAN leaves and crosses to them. He is a classic California surfer and talks as such.

NEPTUNE: Whoa, whoa, whoa! Easy, Doris, hands off the fans! What did we talk about? Breathe. (*Demonstrating deep breathing.*) Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out.

DORIS: I know how to breathe, sir.

NEPTUNE: Alright! Keep it up. Exhale that anger. Feel better?

DORIS: (*Still angry.*) Yes, sir.

NEPTUNE: Then let's let go of our new friend.

DORIS: I'm going to let you go now.

ALEX: I'd appreciate it.

NEPTUNE: Sorry about my bodyguard, *mi amigo*. She gets a little worked up over—what did you call it?

DORIS: Basic safety protocol.

NEPTUNE: Whatever that is. (*Seeing KID.*) No wayyy! Kid Mercury, long time no see!

KID: Hey, Uncle. Good to see you again.

NEPTUNE: Likewise! What's it been? Ten, twelve years?

KID: (*Sort of offended.*) I saw you at Thanksgiving this year.

NEPTUNE: And who might you be? Any friend of Kid's is a friend of mine!

KID: (*Wounded.*) We had dinner at my apartment! I cooked ten different sides!

ALEX: Hi, my name's Alex. I am such a huge fan of yours, Mr. Neptune.

NEPTUNE: Groovy, man, groovy. Let me sign your arm. (*Starts signing.*) Hey, Kid, does this guy know we're secretly gods?

KID: Yes, but thank you as always for your discretion on the matter.

NEPTUNE: Sure thing. "Keep on keepin' on, signed Johnny Neptune." (*To KID.*) So what brings you to my neck of the woods? I didn't think I would see you until the memorial tonight.

KID: How do you know about Zeus?

NEPTUNE: (*Gravely.*) The ocean told me.

ALEX: Whoa, that's incredible! Is that your god power?

NEPTUNE: No, it's this new app called Ocean. (*Pulls out his phone.*) It notifies you about group events. Persephone invited me to the memorial this morning.

ALEX: Oh.

DORIS: We also heard that Minerva has taken the case. Is that true?

KID: Yes! She's back at it. Isn't that exciting?

NEPTUNE: I thought I'd never see the day. After Paul, I half thought the old Minerva was gone for good.

ALEX: Who's Paul?

KID and NEPTUNE share a look.

NEPTUNE: He was Minerva's partner on the force. He died a few years back. It's a long story.

ALEX: So I've heard.

KID: (*Eager to change the subject.*) Anyway, since I'm here, I was thinking I would just give you a lift back to New York. What do you say?

DORIS: I think we can make that work, Sir. If Kid can take us there and back by tomorrow.

KID: You got it.

NEPTUNE: So I'll be able to mourn the tragic loss of my beloved brother? ...AWESOME! I'm stoked. Come on, Doris, help me grab my things.

NEPTUNE and DORIS cross to exit, then DORIS turns and motions for KID and ALEX to follow. ALPHA, DELTA, and GAMMA enter donning their masks again.

ALPHA: Alright, Delta. You're on point. Gamma, you back me up.

DELTA: I've got a bad feeling about this, Alpha.

GAMMA: I'm not sure either. I mean robbing a bank is one thing, but this is murder.

ALPHA: (*Shhh.*) You heard what Styx said. His employer will kill us if we don't do this. It's us or him.

DELTA: This doesn't feel right.

GAMMA: We should make a run for it!

ALPHA: No! We're too far in. Now just do your jobs and we can all go home rich!

Enter NEPTUNE, followed by DORIS (holding a large bag), KID, and ALEX.

NEPTUNE: All I'm saying is, El Niño is a fickle mistress! Who knows where she might turn up!

DORIS: For the last time, we are not bringing your surfboard to New York in the middle of winter!

ALEX: They installed a hydrotherapy tub at the Y down on 15th, I bet that would work. What do you think? (*Seeing the masked strangers.*) Oh boy.

NEPTUNE, DORIS, ALEX, and KID come face to face with the masked assailants, ALPHA, DELTA, and GAMMA.

ALPHA: Let's make this quick, Neptune.

DORIS drops the bags and tries to run to NEPTUNE'S defense. NEPTUNE stops DORIS.

NEPTUNE: (*Serious.*) It's alright, Doris.

DORIS: Sir, this is my job...

NEPTUNE: These three aren't crazed fans. Are you?

ALPHA, DELTA, and GAMMA share uneasy looks and draw knives.

GAMMA: Sorry, man. This isn't personal.

NEPTUNE: I know. You were sent here.

DELTA: How did he know—

ALPHA: Focus, you two! Ignore him.

NEPTUNE: Kid. Open the portal. We're leaving, and you're not going to stop us.

ALPHA: I don't think so.

SFX: A crack of thunder is heard and the lights flash. KID runs to SR door and knocks to open a portal.

NEPTUNE: I've never made a typhoon indoors before, but I'm betting it won't be pretty.

GAMMA: Oh, god, he's one of them. I'm out of here!

DELTA: Me too!

ALPHA: Get back here! They'll kill us!

KID: Portal's ready!

SFX: Another crack of thunder.

ALPHA: Ah, to hell with this. AHH!

ALPHA charges with the knife. DORIS counters ALPHA with martial arts and sends ALPHA sprawling. NEPTUNE, KID, and ALEX make their way to the portal.

DORIS: Why were you trying to kill Neptune? Who sent you?

ALPHA: *(Retreating.)* You're all crazy! You're all crazy!

NEPTUNE: Doris, come on!

NEPTUNE, KID, ALEX, and DORIS dive through KID'S portal. SFX: Another thunderclap and the lights dim.

ACT ONE, SCENE 5

AT START: *Metropolitan Museum. Lights up on the interior, set for the gala. Tables here and there have trays of champagne. SFX: Light music plays as the PARTY GUESTS mingle, PERSEPHONE in their midst. SERVERS have trays of hors d'oeuvres. Among them are VENUS and BACCHUS. ARTEMIS, followed by AGENT ONE, enter.*

ARTEMIS: Sergeant Mars hasn't made contact yet, so I want you and the other agents to hang back. No one makes a move unless you have my direct orders, got it? *(Pointedly.)* We can't afford any more mistakes on this one.

AGENT ONE: I still don't understand what happened, Agent Hunt! One minute we had them in custody, and then...

ARTEMIS: ...they were gone. No excuses, just keep it together this time.

AGENT ONE: Yes, ma'am.

ARTEMIS and AGENT ONE mingle with the crowd. At center, PERSEPHONE clinks her glass with a spoon to get everyone's attention. In the middle of PERSEPHONE'S speech, PLUTO enters inconspicuously, and listens.

PERSEPHONE: Hello everyone, and welcome all to the twelfth annual benefit gala for the Metropolitan Museum of History.

Light applause from PARTY GUESTS.

PERSEPHONE: It is the Cerberus Corporation's great honor to host this event every year. Special thanks to Love Drunk Party Planners for making this party possible.

More light applause from PARTY GUESTS.

BACCHUS: Thank you, thank you. We deserve it.

PERSEPHONE: Many people are not aware, but when this company was starting out, the museum and its new curator were our very first clients. And if you notice at the entrances and exits, you'll see that we are still providing our services to the museum to this day. It's a partnership that is very close to our heart. I remember—

PLUTO: *(Having entered mid-speech, now taking center stage)* —If only our staff could protect people from death by boredom. *(Polite laughter.)* In all seriousness, my wife and I are very grateful to you all for coming out in support of the museum, and in support of my late brother, who was its longtime curator. I know I speak for everyone who knew him when I say there will never be anyone like him ever again. I invite everyone to join me in a toast later tonight to honor his memory. Until then, enjoy the party.

There is applause from the PARTY GUESTS. PLUTO pulls PERSEPHONE DS to talk privately.

PLUTO: Don't you ever embarrass me like that again.

MINERVA enters SR and sidles up to hear PERSEPHONE and PLUTO'S conversation. IRIS enters from SL and walks to PERSEPHONE.

PERSEPHONE: I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about, Pluto.

(Takes a glass of champagne from IRIS.) Thank you, Iris.

PLUTO: Of course you do. You always do. *(Wrestles the other glass away from IRIS. Pointedly, to IRIS.)* You can go.

IRIS: *(Looking to PERSEPHONE for confirmation.)* Ma'am?

PERSEPHONE: Go ahead.

PLUTO: Listen, Persephone. No matter what you might tell yourself, Cerberus belongs to me.

PERSEPHONE: I built this company, Pluto. Me. Not You.

PLUTO: Perhaps... Cleopatra built; Alexander conquered. This is my empire, Persephone. You just live in it.

PLUTO downs his glass of champagne and exits SL. MARS enters SR.

MINERVA: He does realize Alexander the Great never met Cleopatra, right? Totally different time periods.

PERSEPHONE: *(Clearly frustrated.)* Can I help you with something, Minerva?

MINERVA: Nope. Just enjoying the party. Hey, want to hear a joke about a car?

PERSEPHONE: No.

MINERVA: What's green and has wheels?

PERSEPHONE: I don't have time for this. *(Exits.)*

MINERVA: *(Shouting after her.)* Here's a hint: it's not a car!

MARS: *(Sidling up.)* I always hated that joke. Dad never told us the answer.

MINERVA: Did you find out any more information about Uncle Pluto?

MARS: Actually, yes. *(Pulls out his notebook.)* The museum has been struggling financially, so they're looking to be bought out. Three guesses what company put an offer on the table.

MINERVA: Cerberus.

MARS: Bingo. But wait, there's more. Guess who was the only board member to oppose the sale?

MINERVA: Zeus.

MARS: Right again.

MINERVA: But now that Zeus is out of the picture... why would a security company want to buy a museum?

MARS: We need to find out more. What do you say, partner? (*Extends his hand for a shake.*)

MINERVA: (*Reluctant.*) Alright. I guess you haven't been totally useless on this case. What do you say, shall we go question our dear uncle?

MARS and MINERVA are about to shake hands, but NEPTUNE comes up between them. He is followed, at a distance, by DORIS, KID and ALEX.

NEPTUNE: OK, but if your questions are about my personal life, my answer is "No comment."

MINERVA: Uncle Neptune? And Doris! And... oh, what the hell. You brought the kid here?

KID: (*Offended.*) Hey, he was my dad too!

MINERVA: No, not you Kid, him kid! What is Alex doing here?

ALEX: What do you mean? I'm your partner.

MINERVA: You're my assistant. Why did you bring him along, Kid?

ALEX: Maybe everyone doesn't think I'm as useless as you do.

MINERVA: I never said that. But maybe a murder investigation isn't the best way to be getting your feet wet!

ALEX: Well if you had taken me along on any of your other cases—

NEPTUNE: Whoa, there! Come on *compadres*, settle down. Doris, show them how to breathe.

DORIS: No thanks.

NEPTUNE: Well calm it down anyway, would you? Too much negative energy. I'm still cleansing my chi from this afternoon.

MINERVA: What is he talking about?

KID: There was an attempt on Neptune's life this afternoon.

MARS: You're kidding.

DORIS: Three yahoos in masks came at us with knives. Don't worry, no one was hurt.

MINERVA: I stopped three masked criminals from robbing a bank last night. (*Exasperated.*) What is going on?

KID: I'm not sure, but there's more. Here, Mars. It's the autopsy report for Dad. I picked it up from the hospital on our way over.

MARS: Let me see. (*Reading it over.*) He was... poisoned? But that seals it!

ALEX: Seals what?

MARS: Our Uncle Pluto's god artifact is the Poison Chalice. If Zeus was poisoned, then we've got our murderer, no question.

MINERVA: (*Thoughtful.*) Maybe...

MARS: (*Exasperated.*) Maybe? No, he did it. I'm asking Cousin Artemis to call in her agents.

MINERVA: Artemis? Why would you call in the Feds?

MARS: This is Pluto we're talking about. First Dad, now Uncle Neptune? Think about it: those are the only two gods more powerful than him!

NEPTUNE: Ooo! Shrimp cocktails! Excuse me. (*Follows a SERVER.*)

MARS: If he really is making a power grab, we're going to need some serious back up. Right?

MINERVA: (*Unconvinced.*) Don't you think it's all too... I don't know, a little too easy? I feel like Pluto is smarter than this.

MARS: You're the one that suspected Pluto in the first place! Don't overcomplicate it.

MINERVA: I'm telling you, I feel like there's more to this!

MARS: And I'm telling you—

The argument is cut off as BACCHUS and VENUS swagger up. VULCAN enters in the background.

BACCHUS: Hello, party people! (*Looking around.*) Why the long faces? What is this, a funeral?

KID: (*Confused.*) Yes.

BACCHUS: Oh, yeah. Well, whatever, the party stops for no one. Keep drinking, I say!

KID: Thank you, party god.

VENUS: Oh, lighten up, Kid. If you ask me, everyone needs to loosen up a little. Vulcan, why so dour! It's an open bar!

VULCAN: What? Bacchus just charged me ten dollars!

BACCHUS pushes VULCAN out of the way.

BACCHUS: Cheers, everybody! Tell them about the champagne, Venus.

VENUS: Everyone, I'm here to hand out our special champagne. But don't drink it yet, this is for Mr. Pluto's toast. We'll drink to your father's memory after his speech.

BACCHUS: It's an excellent year. (*Smells the drink, makes a sour face.*) Ugh, actually, this is absolute swill. Hold on, I'll fix it. (*Snaps and everyone's champagne changes color. Drinks again.*) Now that is a wine worth waiting for. Ooo, that's good. (*Chugs his flute.*)

MARS: Worth the wait, huh?

BACCHUS: God of wine, remember? What do you want from me? (*As he exits, he encounters VULCAN.*) Come on, Vulcan. We're going dancing.

VULCAN: I don't want to.

BACCHUS: Party on, kids!

BACCHUS, VENUS, and VULCAN exit. Those remaining exchange a shrug and drink.

MINERVA: That is good. So can we please talk to Pluto?

MARS: (*Sigh.*) God help us when Minerva Owlster wants to follow her gut. Fine. But make it fast. I just spotted Artemis, and I am telling her to call for backup.

MARS and MINERVA begin to exit. MINERVA turns around when ALEX attempts to follow.

MINERVA: Whoa, whoa, whoa. Where do you think you're going?

ALEX: With you, to interrogate Pluto.

MINERVA: Nu-uh. No way, kid.

ALEX: Miss Owlster, if you'd only give me a chance—

MINERVA: (*Bracing him around the shoulders, parental.*) Alex, I can't be a good detective if half my brain is worrying about what's going to happen to you. You can stay at the party, but keep away from the gods, OK?

ALEX: (*Stubbornly.*) You can't stop me.

MINERVA: Mars?

ALEX: Oh no, please don't—

MARS: Stay put, soldier!

ALEX: (*Jumping to attention.*) *Etiam, Generalis!* Ugh, I hate that! Wait, Miss Owl—

MINERVA: (*Running to catch up with MARS.*) Stay away from the gods, Alex!

ALEX is left standing dejected. He is approached by DORIS, holding some hors d'oeuvres.

DORIS: Don't do anything stupid.

ALEX: Excuse me?

DORIS: I know that look. I invented that look.

ALEX: What are you talking about?

DORIS: When did you find out your boss was a god? This week, right?

ALEX: Today.

DORIS: Yeesh. OK, well then this advice goes double for you. I know how overwhelming it can be when you first find out, but you can't lose your head. They're the all-mighty Olympians, and you and me, we're just the puny mortals they happen to be hanging out with this decade. There's nothing you can do to impress them. Trust me. I've tried. (*Drinks champagne.*)

ALEX: I'm trying to get her to see that I'm not some helpless little kid!

DORIS: Compared to them, we're all kids. Like I said, don't do anything stupid.

ALEX storms off in frustration. DORIS shrugs and exits. Enter PLUTO, pursued by MINERVA and MARS.

MARS: Give it up, Minerva. He's never going to talk. We've got more than enough evidence without a confession.

MINERVA: Your brother was poisoned, Pluto. Don't you care?

PLUTO: Funny thing about being lord of the underworld; you kind of stop fearing death.

MARS: Sicko. We're going to make sure you rot in jail forever.

MINERVA: Don't listen to him. You know something, don't you? Something you haven't told us yet.

PLUTO: I know what my brother was planning, if that's what you mean.

MINERVA: *(To MARS.)* I told you there was more to this! He was planning something?

PLUTO: Yes. Something that would affect us all.

MARS: Why would Zeus tell you anything?

PLUTO: *(Disinterested.)* We were not as distant as people assume. I did not particularly like my brother, but then again, I don't particularly like anyone. Anyway, I liked him more than my other brother.

NEPTUNE: *(Sneaking up and hugging PLUTO.)* Did your aura lose weight? It feels thinner. You've been using the sandalwood oil I sent you. *(Leaves without waiting for a response.)*

PLUTO: As I was saying, Zeus and I understood one another well, and talked often. He told me his plan for the family, and although I disagreed, I understood his reasoning and was willing to play along.

MINERVA: What plan?

VENUS: *(Clinks her glass and gets everyone's attention.)* Everyone, let's hear it for the man of the hour: our host, Mr. Pluto!

PLUTO: *(During the applause.)* We can speak more on this after my toast. *(To the PARTY GUESTS.)* Thank you! Thank you!

PLUTO takes his place for his speech, while MARS and MINERVA discuss.

MINERVA: Call Artemis off, I'm begging you. Let's see how this plays out.

MARS: No, Minerva. Unlike you, I'm still bound by the badge. I have means, motive, and opportunity. It's time to call it in! I need to find Cousin Artemis. Let me through.

MINERVA: *(Stops MARS, grabbing him around the shoulders.)* No!

MARS: Get out of my way, Minerva!

MINERVA: My gut says—

MARS: Your gut! Your gut! I'm done listening to your gut! Last time I did, we lost Paul!

MINERVA: *(This is too bitter. MINERVA brushes past MARS and exits.)* See you around, Mars.

MARS: *(With regret.)* Minerva, wait!

MINERVA leaves as ARTEMIS enters.

ARTEMIS: Come on, Mars. My agents are here. Time to get in position.

MARS and ARTEMIS exit.

PLUTO: As many of you already know, our benefit tonight is serving the dual purpose of honoring my late brother. What to say about him? He was a kind, generous soul. Like many of us, his past was full of the regrets of youth.

Enter ARTEMIS, MARS, AGENT ONE, AGENT TWO, and AGENT THREE. The AGENTS are in FBI jackets. PLUTO takes note of this and loosens his tie. He clears his throat.

PLUTO: Yes, as I was saying, he was a man who... sought to make amends for his past. Devoted to service, to growth. *(Cough.)* Excuse me. I... my, it's a little warm in here, isn't it?

ARTEMIS, MARS, AGENT ONE, AGENT TWO, and AGENT THREE are closing in. PLUTO wipes his brow.

PLUTO: I would ask everyone to raise a glass... to my brother.

PLUTO raises a glass, but the room is now full of tension, and no one responds. PERSEPHONE steps forward to come between PLUTO and ARTEMIS, MARS, AGENT ONE, AGENT TWO, and AGENT THREE.

PERSEPHONE: What is the meaning of this?

ARTEMIS: Mr. Pluto, we are arresting you on suspicion of murder.

BACCHUS: *(From the crowd.)* Boo! No cops! Booooo!

PERSEPHONE: You can't do this. What evidence is there?

AGENT THREE: Step aside, please, ma'am.

AGENT TWO: We won't ask again.

MARS: Come quietly, Pluto.

PLUTO: I want... to speak to my lawyer... *(Coughs again.)* I'm sorry, could I have a glass of... *(Coughs, sputters, and collapses, beginning to convulse.)*

PERSEPHONE: *(Running to his aid.)* Pluto!

KID: (*Rushing forward.*) Back off! Give him some air!

PERSEPHONE: (*Distraught.*) Pluto! Pluto!

MARS: Kid, what's wrong with him?

KID: He's in cardiac arrest! I think he's been poisoned. Alex, hold his legs!

ARTEMIS: Nobody touch anything! Don't drink that champagne!

AGENT ONE: Everyone back it up!

PERSEPHONE: Kid! Please tell me he's OK! (*Pause.*)

KID: (*In shock, to the room.*) He's dead.

Curtain.

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