

DEAN. Daphne, what are you doing?! You said he wanted to tell me himself and then you said that he thinks of it as –

DAPHNE. What's your extension?

DEAN. You know I am completely confused by –

DAPHNE. *(Grabbing her by the shoulders and shaking her.)*
WHAT'S YOUR EXTENSION?!

DEAN. Three two eight.

DAPHNE. *(Runs to the phone and dials.)* Three two eight. Hello? Ralph? No, the Dean's here, only I wanted to ask you hmm? "How does it look?" The book? It looks magnificent. It's like *Gone With the Wind*, only it really is.

(She hangs up.)

He's waiting for you.

DEAN. My dear, whatever it is, take heart. It's a college. If you weren't slightly insane, you wouldn't be here at all.

(She exits. DAPHNE is very still for a moment. Her heart has stopped beating and she starts to cry.)

DAPHNE. Oh what'll I do? What'll I do?!

(She sobs so hard it hurts and she puts her hand on her chest to stop herself. There she feels the necklace with the charm that ARISTIDE gave her in Naxos. She grabs it fiercely.)

Oh save me, Gods of Ancient Greece!

(And she runs from the room. Then suddenly we hear epic motion picture theme music at full blast. It is stirring, full of blaring trumpets and great excitement. A shaft of light appears, then a puff of smoke – and enter the GODS OF COMEDY, DIONYSUS and*

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THALIA. *They wear Greek robes and pose with magnificence.)*

(Before we go on: DIONYSUS is one of the twelve Olympians of the Hellenic pantheon. He is not only the God of Comedy, he is also the God of Wine and Revelry. The ancient epics describe him as "a joy for mortals," but he is also the God of Misrule, with a hearty appetite for all things sexual. He is a son of Zeus and has been depicted in art by everyone from Michelangelo to Picasso. His tastes are boisterous, he is innately anarchic, and he loves the good life. Best of all, he's an enthusiast. He is the God of Ecstasy, of being outside yourself. He is also extremely lovable and fun to be with.)

(THALIA, meanwhile, is seriously beautiful and seriously sexy. She is everything that men dream about but pretend they don't. She is technically a Muse, which is a kind of demi-goddess. There are nine Muses in Greek mythology, and she is the Muse of Comedy and Idyllic Poetry. Her mother, Mnemosyne, is the Goddess of Memory (see the portrait by Dante Gabriel Rossetti) and her eight sisters include Clio (History), Melpomene (Tragedy), Polyhymnia (Song), and Terpsichore (Dance). While she is not exactly the sharpest sword in the armory, she makes up for it with her wonderful self-confidence. She's beautiful, joyous and full of charm.)

START:

DIONYSUS. Welcome!

THALIA. To us!

DIONYSUS. For we

THALIA. are the Gods

DIONYSUS. of Comedy!

DIONYSUS & THALIA. Ta daaaaa!

(Confetti bursts out brilliantly behind them.)

DIONYSUS. And wait! Methinks a maiden is in distress in this kingdom.

THALIA. And methinks we can helpeth her and aideth her if we do findeth her and pityeth her.

DIONYSUS. Which we willeth.

THALIA. No doubteth.

DIONYSUS. Yea, verily.

DIONYSUS & THALIA. And we shall act like *gods!*

(They pose, then glance up at the heavens.)

THALIA. Psst!

DIONYSUS. Yeah?

THALIA. D'ya think Zeus, *(Calling heavenward.)* THE REMARKABLE MASTER OF ALL THE GODS *(To DIONYSUS.)* is still watchin' us?

DIONYSUS. Nope, he's gone.

THALIA. Oh, thank goodness. He is such a challenge.

DIONYSUS. Scroll, please.

THALIA. Yes, sir.

(She pulls out the scroll.)

DIONYSUS. *(Reading.)* "Decree from Zeus, God of all the Heavens and the Earth: To the Gods of Comedy, Dionysus and Thalia. Subject: Daphne Rain."

THALIA. "Instructions: This mortal woman is frightened of heart, closed of mind, and she needs to unleash the gods from within. Therefore, your task is to give this woman"

DIONYSUS & THALIA. "an adventure and a happy ending."

THALIA. "Succeed and you shall prosper forever."

DIONYSUS. "Fail and you shall burn in Hades until your flesh and sinews are steaming red and ulcerous to the touch and you shall be banished forever from the sight of Olympus. Cordially yours, Zeus Almighty."

THALIA. I just hope we get it right this time.

DIONYSUS. I beg your pardon.

THALIA. It gets discouraging.

DIONYSUS. What are you – ...? Are we ever wrong about anything?

THALIA. Oh, please. Abraham Lincoln?

DIONYSUS. He was tense. He needed a good laugh.

THALIA. "There's a wonderful new play tonight at Ford's Theater, Mr. President."

DIONYSUS. Hey, it was worth a shot.

THALIA. And Napoleon?

DIONYSUS. What?

THALIA. You bet against him.

DIONYSUS. He was four feet tall. He surprised everybody.

THALIA. Oh Di, if we don't get this one right, we're in a lot of trouble. Zeus says he'll banish us forever.

DIONYSUS. No more nectar.

THALIA. No more ambrosia.

DIONYSUS. No more chicken bones in a little circle.

DAPHNE. *(Offstage.)* Hello?

THALIA. Shh. Somebody's comin'. It could be her.

(They pose. DAPHNE enters.)

DAPHNE. Hello? Can I help you with something?

DIONYSUS. Are you Daphne Rain?

DAPHNE. Yes, I am.

DIONYSUS. Then the question is, can we help you?

DIONYSUS & THALIA. Ta daaaaa!

~~**DAPHNE.** I just don't – oh. Oh I *see*. You're *actors*. How did you hear about it so quickly?~~

~~**THALIA.** I was sittin' by the Stream of Cadmus drying my nails when Hermes, Master of Cunning, dashes up and cries, "You've got a mission!" And then by accident he falls in the stream and I pull him out.~~

~~**DIONYSUS.** That was very brave for a Muse.~~

~~**THALIA.** Thanks. I like to think of myself as a eunuch.~~

END