

The Psyche Project
Written by
Jenny Connell

Original production co-conceived and created with director Marie Brown, Choreographer Tom Truss, and the Psyche Project ensemble.

For all rights inquiries, please contact:
Jenny Connell
349 Saint John's Place #3C
Brooklyn, NY 11238
(970) 319-5036
Connell.jenny@gmail.com

The Psyche Project

CHARACTERS*

Psyche The most beautiful woman. Ever.
Eros God of Desire. Soulful, sexy, a bit of a slut.
Aphrodite God(dess) of Love, and keeper of The Real Thing.
Zephyr The wind. A minor god, and proud of it.
Circe A witch, or goddess of transformation. Still
 Not over the whole Odysseus thing.
King Figurehead, of the family and the kingdom
Sister One Type-A Oldest sibling. Jealous of Psyche.
Sister Two All about getting married.
Oracle From Gods' Mouths to her ear...via Blue Tooth.
Persephone The wife of the God of the underworld.
Boatman Guardian of the River Styx.
Pizza Girl Serving Sbarros in Hell.
Zeus The Big Kahuna - sort of.

An optional movement chorus, consisting of:

Fear
Ego
Doubt
Anxiety

*doubling welcome

ON STAGING:

"Scenes" are indicated, but action is continuous.
Think BRASH, HIGH-OCTANE, OVER-THE-TOP, PRECISE. When in
doubt, go for the joke. When in doubt, go for gorgeous.

ON TEXT:

/ = overlapping dialogue.

Capitalizations in the middle of sentences are a guide to
emphasis.

If you're doing the show at a school and MUST fudge the
profanities, go ahead. Otherwise, please "speak the speech."

"I AM PRETTY"

A gorgeous tableau -- every cliché of "Greek theater" come to life. Think doric columns, white costumes, maybe togas.

The ensemble worships at the feet of Psyche -- pretty girl, mortal. Prayers, flowers, burnt offerings, genuflection, you name it. Psyche is Beauty, and Beauty is God.

Then she speaks.

PSYCHE

It was the first thing people said to my father the first they said to me.

ALL

"Aren't you *Pretty*."

PSYCHE

Is the Story of My Life. The sky is up, the earth is down, and

ALL

I. Am. *Pretty*.

SISTER ONE

"*Pretty*" gets you things.

ALL

Opened doors. Free meals. Credit cards. Jewelry.

SISTER ONE

If you are pretty enough, men don't dare to grab your ass.

SISTER TWO

If you are pretty enough, you can grab theirs. If you want to.

PSYCHE

What I want is True Love. What I want is to get married. What I want is / to have babies. No worship. No pedestal. I want...

SISTERS

Trips to Bali, personal trainers, couture dresses, dinner at Nobu, private jets --

PSYCHE

No, I want...

SISTERS

Daily massages, a house in the Hamptons, an art collection, a husband who speaks ten languages, a gardener who speaks cunnilingus...

PSYCHE

No, I want the Real Thing. Every night I dream a man comes to me in my sleep.

I dream he slips beneath my sheets, slips between my legs, I dream we climb a mountain and slide down the other side, entwined in each other. I dream he whispers my name, tells me his secrets in his sleep.

I'm tired of dreams.

I'm tired of waking up alone. Sometimes I feel like a Cat on a Hot Tin --.

Aphrodite enters, a nuclear explosion of music and light. Her feet don't touch the ground.

Her entrance shatters everything. Every vestige of the ancient world -- gone. This is the world of youtube, Versace, MTV.

APHRODITE

You want to piss off a goddess?

Here's how you do it.

Powerpoint but glamorous.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

One. Stop bringing her presents. Nix the flowers, screw the chocolate, forget about burnt offerings, incense, bubble bath. Don't light candles.

Two. Ignore her. Don't call, don't write. You want something? Assume she knows. You appreciate all she's done for you? Assume she'll guess.

Three. Find the woman who is her PALE IMITATION -- eons younger, lacking in experience, wisdom, insight, power. Find the woman whose surface, at best, MOCKS your goddess's depths. And hold her up. Worship HER. Shower HER with your affection, come to HER on your knees, ask of HER what you asked of me. And watch what happens. You think your crops won't shrivel in the ground?

Think: Viagra ads.

You think your livestock won't die in droves?

Think: Plunging stock market charts.
 Think: unemployed I-bankers.
 You think the locusts won't descend? You think I won't tear
 your lovely new trophy to pieces, leave her bleeding and
 broken and wrecked? Then Fuck You. You've never met a
 goddess.

APHRODITE

Eros! Eros.

Music. It oozes sex. Eros emerges
 from the back of the house, half-naked.
 He is every boy you never got to sleep
 with in high school. He's just slept
 with everyone in the audience.

EROS

Last night was great.
 You were incredible.
 Where did you learn to do that? No, don't tell me. I'm just
 glad you did. Baby, can you hand me my pants?
 Where did I leave my shirt? Thanks.
 (to someone with his shoes)
 Could you...? Thanks, doll. Gods, that thing you did with
 your tongue...amazing. Wow. And that scarf trick?
 Oh. My. Gods. Fabulous.
 Oh - almost forgot.

Eros grabs a semi-automatic pistol,
 "shoots" members of the audience.
 Makeout sessions ensue.

(showing off his...piece)

Like that? Careful, it's loaded.

APHRODITE

Are you nearly through?

EROS

(to the crowd)

If music be the food of love, play on.

Eros shoots again.

Call me.

NO ORACLES

King enters. Think Texas Oil Tycoon,
 think Burger King Crown.

The Oracle appears. Blue Tooth, sharp
 suit.

KING

The Oracle?!? Girls, we agreed --

ALL

No Oracles!

KING

...Look what happened to Oedipus! My eyesight's bad enough as it is.

SISTER ONE

The least you can do is / listen.

Oracle circles Psyche. Think:
exhibit A.

ORACLE (CONT'D)

Listen. Psyche's been tough to diagnose. Medically, she's normal. Bloodwork's fine, hormones within range, nothing communicable, no STDs but then she's a virgin --

SISTER ONE

So she claims.

SISTER TWO

She TOTALLY is. Have you seen the way she --

KING

Girls! It's none of our business.

ORACLE

No?

KING

Not in this day and age.

ORACLE

The only real problem is --

SISTERS, ORACLE AND KING

Her Beauty.

SISTER TWO

It's outta control!

ORACLE

She's got no trouble attracting men.

KING

We know *that*. We want to know why she can't keep them. We want to know why they keep jumping off buildings --

SISTER TWO

-- and breaking out in boils and falling into elevator shafts and running in front of trains and --

ORACLE

Okay!

APHRODITE

Did you SEE my temples?

EROS

I was...tied up.

SISTER ONE

All the men we know are gay, taken, or on life support--

SISTER TWO

There's no one left for *us*!

APHRODITE/ORACLE

Look.

ORACLE

A few mangled men are the least of our problems. This famine shit is totally out of hand. The food shortage is killing us. And the stock market!? Big fucking / disaster.

APHRODITE

A Disaster! They're in ruins! Abandoned, ignored, transgressed -

ORACLE

It all started when they put Psyche on a pedestal. Your daughter's really pissing somebody off up there.

APHRODITE

It's Blasphemy.

SISTER ONE

And we're *all* paying the price for it.

APHRODITE

Oh, GODS, you're good at that.

EROS

That's not *all* I'm good at.

APHRODITE

What?

EROS

I said: People don't mean anything by it.

APHRODITE

Don't *mean* anything? Have I taught you nothing? You're a GOD, Cupid. Do you have any idea where you get your power.

EROS

(meaning his crotch)
I know exactly where I get my power.

APHRODITE

We are gods because they make us gods. Because mortals pay pay us homage, pay us heed. Without them, we don't exist... And without us, those poor bastards don't have love.

EROS

So what?

APHRODITE

LOVE is what gives their lives meaning. You know, if you spent a little more time thinking and a little less time waving your --

Aphrodite means the gun. He is, indeed, waving it around.

EROS

Meaning!? Love is...fun. Love is lovely...but meaningful? Come on, Ma --

APHRODITE

You wait. Someday you'll shoot yourself in the foot, Cupid, then you'll see.

EROS

Stop calling me Cupid.

APHRODITE

It's your name.

EROS

It's Eros. EROS. They hear "Cupid," they think: naked toddler heart-shaped bow --

APHRODITE

(To audience)

He has the cutest baby pictures --

EROS

They hear "Eros," they know I mean business.

APHRODITE

(re: the gun)

Watch where you point that thing.

EROS

(re: baby pictures)

Don't look at those.

APHRODITE

You've heard of Psyche.

King's daughter?
 EROS

She has to go.
 APHRODITE

You mean -- a hit?
 EROS

I've tried curses, famines, nothing works anymore.
 APHRODITE

So what do we do?
 KING

What do you think? You get rid of her.
 ORACLE

Thank Gods.
 SISTER ONE

What do you mean?
 KING

I mean get rid of her. Drown her like a kitten. Push her off a cliff.
 ORACLE

What?
 SISTER ONE

Wait.
 SISTER TWO

just kidding. Leave her on the mountain.
 ORACLE

She's always been outdoorsy.
 SISTER TWO

What the hell are the Gods planning?
 KING

Look, I'm just the messenger on this shit, so you can cut the attitude. This is the voice of the GODS here.
 ORACLE

Find a monster, find an ass, find the ugliest creature alive, and aim for the heart.
 APHRODITE

I don't think I can -
 KING

ORACLE
 What don't you think? Do you know who I am?

KING
 You're the Ora--

ORACLE
 That's right. I'm the mother-fucking Oracle. Do you know what that means? It means they shoot laser beams of information straight into my skull so I can impart that information to ungrateful idiots like yourself.

APHRODITE
 I want her enraptured.

ORACLE
 You want to save your kingdom?

APHRODITE
 I want her flayed alive.

ORACLE
 You want to save your ass? You take Psyche on a one-way hike.

APHRODITE/ORACLE
 I want her gone.

ORACLE
 --by morning.

All exit but King and Psyche.

KING
 Psyche? Pack your bags. We're going on a hike.

EROS HAS BAD AIM

Psyche sleeps.

Moonlight.

Eros appears, gun at the ready.

He aims.

Psyche turns, lifts her head.

Drumbeat. Eros lowers his gun, Psyche raises her body, both slowly, slowly.

PSYCHE
 Who are you?

ZEPHYR
How could it be worse?

EROS
Who is the ONE woman my mother wants to see suffer above all others?

ZEPHYR
Psyche.
(beat)
PSYCHE???!!!!?

EROS
KEEP your voice down.

ZEPHYR
How bad is it?

Zephyr tries to look at the wound.
Eros tries to hide it.

EROS
Nothing. A graze.

ZEPHYR
Let me see it.

EROS
It's just a flesh wound.

ZEPHYR
Let me SEE it.

Zephyr grabs Eros, looks at his arm.
Pulls back his jacket. Looks at his
heart. Carnage.

ZEPHYR
Gods.

EROS
You gotta help me.

ZEPHYR
You HAD to stop using arrows. You HAD to upgrade to an
automatic. You dumbass.

EROS
Where do you get off? All you gotta do is blow. I'm the one
who's on call day and night, I'm the one has to figure out
how to pull off hit after hit.

ZEPHYR
You always say love's for suckers.

EROS

It is. How deep is it lodged? Can you get it out?

ZEPHYR

No way, man.

EROS

Can you at least try?

ZEPHYR

Divine retribution, man, you hit me three times last week.

EROS

You're Zephyr. You're the WIND. You have no MEMORY. You forget who you're in love with as soon as the bullet hits.

ZEPHYR

That's my nature.

EROS

I'm so screwed. How am I supposed to do my job, how am I supposed to maintain some kind of professional objectivity, if I'm bleeding all over my hits?

ZEPHYR

Not my problem.

EROS

...How am I supposed to live without her? I have to have her. You gotta help me, Z.

ZEPHYR

You're my boy. What do you need.

EROS

I need you to run an errand.

A moment of understanding. Zephyr suits up.

YOU'RE GETTING MARRIED? BRING BOOTS.

Psyche stands suitcase in hand, very "Hawaiian Barbie."

ZEPHYR

Psyche?

PSYCHE

They told me to wait here.

ZEPHYR

Who's "they?"

PSYCHE

My father. The Oracle. The mob of citizens terrified of their dying livestock. They say the Gods are Angry.

ZEPHYR

What else is new.

PSYCHE

Are you my husband?

ZEPHYR

No.

PSYCHE

Oh.
They say he's a monster.

ZEPHYR

Depends on his mood.

PSYCHE

So you know him?

ZEPHYR

You could say that.

PSYCHE

What's he look like?

ZEPHYR

I couldn't say that.

PSYCHE

What do you mean, you couldn't say?

ZEPHYR

Look, I'm just the messenger. Point A to Point B, I'm your guy.

PSYCHE

"What's my husband look like" is a pretty simple question.

ZEPHYR

Is it?

PSYCHE

Isn't it?

ZEPHYR

Are you ready to go?

PSYCHE

Yes. I wasn't sure what to pack.

ZEPHYR

You'll be fine.

PSYCHE

I figured summer clothes, most people honeymoon somewhere tropical, some beach somewhere, some island, my sisters gave me a new bathing suit, it's a little revealing, but--

ZEPHYR

We're going to a mountain.

PSYCHE

We're already on a mountain.

ZEPHYR

A higher one. You can still say no.

This is a test.

PSYCHE

Will I need boots?

ZEPHYR

You'll be fine. There's a nice view. Ready?

PSYCHE

For what?

Zephyr spirits Psyche away.

GET ME TO THE CHURCH ON TIME

Psyche stands alone in Eros's Palace.

Eros and Zephyr stand apart. Think Groom and groomsman, ten minutes to altar.

EROS

Any sign of my mother?

ZEPHYR

None. Are you sure about this, man? It's not too late to change your mind.

EROS

I can't help it.

ZEPHYR

Sure you can. A bottle of Maker's, a knife, we can have that bullet out in no time. Two days, three tops, you're back in fighting shape, pumping unsuspecting mortals full of lust, screwing anything that moves --

(beat)

Think it through. If this gets back to your mother, she'll kill the girl. And Gods know what she'll do to you.

EROS

Then no one can know.

ZEPHYR

And how, exactly, do you plan to manage that? A girl marries the God of Desire, she's going to tell someone. What are you gonna do, blindfold the girl?

Eros takes out a blindfold.

ZEPHYR

You're outta your mind.

EROS

I'm in love.

Eros moves behind Psyche.

Eros starts to put on the blindfold.

PSYCHE

Wait.

EROS

Don't look.

PSYCHE

Why not?

EROS

Trust me. You have to trust me.

PSYCHE

I do.

Eros covers Psyche's eyes with his hands, covers her mouth with his mouth.

Psyche blindfolds herself.

Eros binds their wrists together.

Eros makes love to Psyche. It's stylized, gorgeous - and clear that Psyche loses her virginity.

THE MORNING AFTER

Psyche sleeps alone. She curls toward Eros's side of the bed, reaches out a hand, comes up empty. She sits up.

She sees Zephyr, perched nearby.

PSYCHE

Where's my husband.

ZEPHYR

Have we met?

PSYCHE

You brought me here.

ZEPHYR

Oh. Sorry, doll. Busy night last night. The wind blows,
the mind goes.

(extending a hand)

Zephyr.

PSYCHE

Where's "here?" Where are we?

ZEPHYR

A secret place. A palace. A pied-a-terre for the Gods.

PSYCHE

For the GODS?!

ZEPHYR

Did I say Gods? I meant -

PSYCHE

My husband is a GOD?

ZEPHYR

Pssht. Ttsk. No. Come on, girly-girl. You know Gods can't
marry MORTALS. Shit. Don't you know anything?

PSYCHE

Well, no, I know, but --

ZEPHYR

But what?

PSYCHE

He FELT like --

ZEPHYR

How do you know what a God feels like.

PSYCHE

I don't. But it seemed like --

PSYCHE (CONT'D)

It seemed like we were engulfed in light. It seemed --

ZEPHYR
Lemme guess. Virgin.

PSYCHE
Well...I was.

ZEPHYR
Figures.

PSYCHE
Wait a minute. You said your name was *Zephyr*?

ZEPHYR
Did I?

PSYCHE
So YOU'RE a god.

ZEPHYR
A minor one, thank you, and proud of it. You never hear about ZEPHYR making crops fail, do you? You never hear about ZEPHYR knocking up some farmer's daughter and turning her into livestock. You never hear about ZEPHYR taking his wrath out on some unsuspecting sorry-ass mortal, do you?

PSYCHE
No.

ZEPHYR
That's right. I do what I'm told. I mind my own business. I blow.

PSYCHE
So who told you to bring me here?

ZEPHYR
Ero -- OH no. No no. Your husband wants to spill his guts, that's his damn business. I ain't takin' sides in that shit.

PSYCHE
So what are you doing here?

ZEPHYR
Chillin. Gotta rest sometime.

PSYCHE
And what am I supposed to do?

ZEPHYR
Whatever you desire.

Psyche does whatever she desires.
Meanwhile:

SIBLING RIVALRY

Sister One and Sister Two enter, both enormously pregnant.

SISTER ONE
Being married is wonderful.

SISTER TWO
Being married is wonderful!

SISTER ONE
Being pregnant is so wonderful!

SISTER TWO
Being pregnant is so wonderful!

SISTER ONE
I feel complete!

SISTER TWO
I feel completely awful! Indigestion! Heartburn! Stretch marks!

SISTER ONE
What do you expect, eating --

SISTER TWO
Chubby hubby?

SISTER ONE
Thanks.

They gorge on ice cream.

SISTER TWO
My hubby called me chubby.

SISTER ONE
You're eating for two.

SISTER TWO
My husband wants a girl. He wants to call her "Psyche."

SISTER ONE
My husband called ME Psyche.

SISTER TWO
Mine too!

SISTER ONE
Three times.

SISTER TWO
 Mine too!

SISTER ONE
 In bed.

SISTER TWO
 Mine -- Oh God. Really?

SISTER ONE
 He said it was an accident.

SISTER TWO
 Mine was joking. I think.

SISTER ONE
 Mine wasn't.

SISTER TWO
 What did you DO?

SISTER ONE
 I pretended not to care.
 It's bad enough she snapped up all the good suitors. It's bad enough she had half the world thinking she was a goddess. God, our whole lives it's been "Psyche this" and "Psyche that" and "Psyche's the most beautiful." What about me? What about us? It's not like we're hags. It's not like we can't turn heads. But as far as anyone's concerned, we don't even have NAMES. We're just the other two sisters. We're just the ones who aren't Psyche.

SISTER TWO
 Wait, what is your name?

SISTER ONE
 I don't remember!

Silence.

SISTER TWO
 I wonder what she's doing right now.

TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE...

Eros enters, packing heat, exhausted.

ZEPHYR
 You look like shit.

PSYCHE
 Husband? Is that you?

EROS

I haven't slept in eight months.

ZEPHYR

Whose fault is that.

EROS

How can I sleep with her beside me? All I want to do is --

ZEPHYR

The same thing you've been doing for thousands of years?

EROS

This is different. She's insatiable. If I were mortal, she'd kill me.

ZEPHYR

You could take a night off.

Psyche turns to Eros, blindfolded.

PSYCHE

Is that you?

EROS

I can't help myself.

Eros reaches for Psyche. Psyche tries to remove the blindfold.

PSYCHE

Why don't YOU wear it tonight.

EROS

No.

PSYCHE

But --

Eros kisses Psyche.

PSYCHE

But I want to see you.

Eros and Psyche make love in a gorgeous, stylized way -- but more mutual than last time. Psyche's learned a few tricks.

EROS

You can see me with all your skin.

PSYCHE

I could see your soul in your eyes if you let me.

PSYCHE

(hidden)
My love? You're still here?!

APHRODITE

No, a Goddess.

APHRODITE
Who've you got
back there?

PSYCHE
Is someone out
there?

EROS

No one.

PSYCHE

Do I smell coffee?

EROS

It's still brewing.

PSYCHE

You never make coffee!

APHRODITE

Up to your usual tricks, I see.

EROS

You know me.

APHRODITE

I know you have a taste for mortal girls. But bringing them home, darling...isn't that beneath you?

EROS

Don't. Start.

APHRODITE

How's business?

Zephyr enters, sees Aphrodite.
Silently freaks out. Eros gestures
"get Psyche out of here!"

Which Zephyr does. With Eros's help.
With difficulty. For the rest of the
scene. In such a way that neither
Aphrodite nor Psyche catch on or see
each other. Think: Three Stooges.

EROS

Busy.

APHRODITE

No mishaps, no complaints?

EROS

It's *Love, Mother*, not a day spa. Of course there are complaints. But no more than usual.

APHRODITE

Ah. Good.

EROS

Why do you ask?

APHRODITE

No reason.
How did things go with Psyche?

EROS

Fine.

APHRODITE

You found her someone sufficiently hideous?

EROS

(Carefully)

He's not even human.

APHRODITE

And you shot him, too?

EROS

He didn't know what hit him.

APHRODITE

And he lives far from my temples?

EROS

The ends of the earth. Why? Your temples are restored, aren't they? The mortals are sufficiently obsequious?

APHRODITE

Watch your tone, young man.

EROS

I'm ten thousand years old, Mom.

APHRODITE

That's no excuse. Where have you been hiding?

EROS

I haven't been hiding.

APHRODITE

For six months, you're MIA. You work yourself into a frenzy and then you just -- disappear. I send Zephyr after you, and you turn up looking like you've been to Hades and back. Are you courting Persephone?

No. EROS
 Are you doing drugs? APHRODITE
 NO. EROS
 Are you using protection? APHRODITE
 No. Wait. Yes. Wait -- none of your business! EROS
 Of course it is. You're my son. Everything has consequences, Darling. APHRODITE
 Not if you're careful. EROS
 And you wonder why I worry. Be careful, Son, I love you. APHRODITE
 I know you do. EROS
Aphrodite kisses his forehead. Pauses.
 Holds her hand to his forehead: fever.
 Only young love runs that hot. Who is she? APHRODITE
Eros backs away.
 WHO IS SHE?!????? APHRODITE
Aphrodite chases Eros from the palace.
 BORED
Psyche knits. Her knitting is epic,
 gargantuan, ridiculous. It threatens
 to bury her alive. Zephyr is perched
 nearby. Maybe he blows a pinwheel.
 I'm bored. PSYCHE
 I thought you were in love. ZEPHYR

PSYCHE

I'm both.

ZEPHYR

Not possible.

PSYCHE

No, it is. I've thought this through. Look at me; what do I do all day? I sit in this huge palace, alone. I eat chocolate, alone. I talk to the wind. I make love to my invisible husband.

ZEPHYR

He's not invisible. He just has a thing for blindfolds.

PSYCHE

And I have a thing for knowing who my husband is.

ZEPHYR

It's dangerous.

PSYCHE

WHY?

ZEPHYR

You have to trust --

PSYCHE

TRUST HIM. I know. He says it every night. Right before he makes me promise never to take off the blindfold.

ZEPHYR

Are you afraid of him?

PSYCHE

No.

ZEPHYR

What are you complaining about. Look at...look at all the knitting you've done.

PSYCHE

I'm not even knitting anything. I'm just...knitting! I don't even like to knit.

ZEPHYR

Have some chocolate.

PSYCHE

(queasy)

No. I'm sick of chocolate.
Besides, my...clothes are tight as it is.

Beat.

ZEPHYR

You could...hike...

PSYCHE

Down a sheer drop? Ten thousand foot cliffs?

ZEPHYR

Good point.

PSYCHE

(beat)

I'm lonely.

ZEPHYR

You've got me.

(beat)

I told you, you can do whatever you want. You can see whoever you want. All you gotta do is ask.

PSYCHE

I want to see my husband.

ZEPHYR

Except him.

PSYCHE

Then I want to see my sisters.

ZEPHYR

...Really?

PSYCHE

Is that so strange?

ZEPHYR

No...I guess...I mean, I'd just heard they were a little...

PSYCHE

A little what?

ZEPHYR

I heard they were total bitches.

PSYCHE

They're family.

ZEPHYR

You mortals and your "families."

PSYCHE

The Gods are just as bad.

ZEPHYR

How would you know? You're mortal.

PSYCHE

And you're "minor." You just do what you're told.
 (her best prima donna)
 Bring me my sisters.

ZEPHYR

Not unless you say "please."

PSYCHE

Please.

ZEPHYR

Fine. But don't say I didn't warn you.

PSYCHE

What's that supposed to mean?

ZEPHYR

Nothing. I just blow. But...they can only stay the day.
 And all information's on a need to know basis. And...

PSYCHE

And what?

ZEPHYR

Just be careful, okay, gorgeous?

PSYCHE

What could go wrong? They're FAMILY.

FAMILY REUNION -- HIDE THE KNIVES

Zephyr blows. Psyche's sisters enter.
 Zephyr caught them mid-spa-treatment.
 They scream. They notice each other.
 And scream. They see Psyche. And
 scream. The three hug -- and scream.

SISTER ONE

Oh. My. Gods. This place is AMAZING.

SISTER TWO

You look AMAZING.

SISTER ONE

(aside)

What else is new.

SISTER TWO

Your skin is GLOWING. We thought you'd DIED.

SISTER ONE

We thought you'd been eaten by a MONSTER.

SISTER TWO

We thought you'd brought the curse of Aphrodite down upon your head and were going to live out the rest of your days suffering for the sin of having been born beautiful.

Beat.

SISTER ONE

We thought Dad was a total ASSHOLE for listening to the Oracle and leaving you on top of that hill.

SISTER TWO

You could have ended up like Oedipus, killing your own father.

SISTER ONE

You could have ended up like Sissyphus, rolling rocks all over the place.

SISTER TWO

You could have ended up like Prometheus, with a giant bird of prey eating out your liver every day, just to have it grow in again overnight.

PSYCHE

Nope. I got married.

Zephyr pulls Psyche aside.

PSYCHE

Ow! What?

SISTER ONE

Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

SISTER TWO

Yeah. Wait. What are you thinking?

SISTER ONE

The Oracle. The Invisible servants. A palace halfway to Mount Olympus. Psyche married a God.

SISTER TWO

Oh My Gods.

SISTER ONE

That bitch! All our work, all our suffering, and she ends up married to a god. What do we get? Prick Princes, Stretch Marks, and a timeshare in Tampa.

SISTER TWO

Tampa? Why did you get a place in --

SISTER ONE
NOT my point. I have a plan.

The sisters conspire. It looks
nefarious, even from a distance.

PSYCHE
What is it, Z?

ZEPHYR
I said "need to know" basis.

PSYCHE
They can't know I'm married?

ZEPHYR
Just play it cool.

PSYCHE
Gods, you are so paranoid.

Psyche returns to sisters. A face-off.

SISTER TWO
Where's your husband?

SISTER ONE
What's he do?

SISTER TWO
When can we meet him?

PSYCHE
You can't.

SISTER ONE
What do you mean "we can't."

PSYCHE
You have to leave at Sundown, and he comes back at sundown,
so...

SISTER TWO
What does he look like?

SISTER ONE
How much does he make?

SISTER TWO
Is he good in bed?

PSYCHE
He's really handsome.

SISTER ONE
He could be anybody.

SISTER TWO
He could be ANYbo -- Sorry.

SISTER ONE
He could be a monster, an ass, the ugliest creature alive.

SISTER TWO
What if he tries to hurt you? What if he tries to kill you?

PSYCHE
He won't.

SISTER ONE
How do you know?

PSYCHE
I just know.

SISTER ONE
You know in your heart?

PSYCHE
Yes.

SISTER ONE
And you trust your heart?

Both sisters laugh.

Sister One produces a candle.

ZEPHYR
Aw, shit.

SISTER ONE
You can trust your eyes. Tonight while he sleeps, light it.
Open your eyes, Psyche. Know your husband.

PSYCHE
No.

SISTER ONE
Just in case.

PSYCHE
No. NO! I love him.

SISTER ONE
You trust him?

PSYCHE

I ---

ZEPHYR

Psyche, don't.

PSYCHE
(she takes the candle)

It's sundown.

Zephyr and the sisters exit. Zephyr looks back.

PSYCHE

Go.

Psyche puts on her blindfold. Zephyr stays.

JUST THIS ONCE

Eros enters, kisses Psyche. She pulls back.

PSYCHE

This morning. Was that your mother?

EROS

Were you listening?

PSYCHE

I've already got a blindfold, should I wear earplugs too?

EROS

She just dropped by for a minute.

PSYCHE

You could have introduced me.
(beat)

You're ashamed of me.
(beat)

Because-I'm-mortal-and-you're-a-God.
(beat)

Hello?

ZEPHYR

He's still here.

PSYCHE

It makes sense. The invisible servants. The fact that you never take me anywhere. Your buddy the Wind. The blindfold. Everybody knows if humans look at gods, they'll die.

ZEPHYR

Old wives tale. Total bullshit.

PSYCHE

So how come Zeus transformed himself into a different animal every ten minutes.

EROS

So Hera wouldn't kick his cheating ass.

PSYCHE

See! See! How do you know that?

Eros looks to Zephyr for help.

ZEPHYR

Wikipedia.

PSYCHE

Zephyr said you're a God.

EROS

Did he, now?

Zephyr gestures "no way."

PSYCHE

He said you're a God. And you're hideous. And married. And you have a thing for...livestock. And that your mother's a total --

ZEPHYR

She's making that up!

PSYCHE

Is it true?

EROS

Which part.

PSYCHE

Any of it. Please say no.

Beat.

EROS

The part about my mother. That's true.

PSYCHE

When can I see you?

EROS

Never.

Psyche removes her blindfold. Lights the candle. Reaches for Eros.

PSYCHE

It's you.

These words echo and echo and echo. Candle wax drips, burns Eros. The pain wakes him.

He stands, naked, nursing his burn.

He exits. We see her heart go with him, see the threads between them pull and break. We can tell it hurts.

PSYCHE

What have I done?

She runs after Eros, disappears. We hear her scream.

Zephyr dives after her.

He returns with Psyche's broken body.

ZEPHYR

You can't fly. You're mortal.

PSYCHE

And he's divine. My husband is the God of Love.

ZEPHYR

Of Lust, actually.

PSYCHE

What have I done? You have to take me to him.

ZEPHYR

I can't.

PSYCHE

What happened to "whatever I desire?"

ZEPHYR

You fell.

PSYCHE

I looked.

ZEPHYR

Same thing.

Zephyr hands her clothes for a long,
long journey.

PSYCHE

You said I wouldn't need boots.

She exits, still barefoot.

THIS MOMENT BROUGHT TO YOU BY VIAGRA

Eros appears, a wound where his heart
should be.

ZEPHYR

You should have told her.

EROS

The burn's spreading.

ZEPHYR

You want me to blow on it?

Eros nods. Zephyr blows. Eros recoils.

ZEPHYR

She's your wife, Eros. You need to go after her.

EROS

I gotta work.

ZEPHYR

Dude, you can't just --

Eros points his gun at Zephyr. Zephyr
raises his hands above his hand.

EROS

I can't what?

ZEPHYR

Nothing. Do what you want. Just stay away from me with that
thing.

Eros's sex music blares. Zephyr covers
his ears. Eros fires. Nothing.
Shoots again. Still nothing.

Zephyr and Eros stare at the gun,
shocked.

Eros tries for an audience member.
Nothing.

EROS

This has never happened to me before.

Zephyr attempts to comfort Eros. Eros recoils in pain.

EROS

Don't touch me!

Eros shoots Zephyr. For the first time, the sound of a shot.

Sorry. I'm sorry.

Zephyr holds his chest, comes away with blood, wipes it on Eros, kisses Eros. Eros tries and fails to fight the kiss. Zephyr exits.

(to audience)

What are you looking at?

Eros exits.

TRANSFORMATION IS MY SPECIALTY

Psyche enters, worse for wear after weeks on the road.

PSYCHE

Hello?

She arrives at the (well-marked) Temple of Circe. Think: wailing wall. Lots of paper.

PSYCHE

Hello? Hello!

(beat)

This place is a disaster.

Psyche restores order to the temple, reading old prayers aloud.

PSYCHE

"Dear Circe, thank you for turning my ex-boyfriend into a frog." "Dear Circe. Odysseus is an idiot. I would treat you right." "Dear Circe. Dear Circe. Dear Circe. Please turn my husband into a ... ew, yikes."

Circe enters behind Psyche with her menagerie of former lovers.

CIRCE

You cleaned my temple.

Psyche falls to her knees, forehead to ground.

CIRCE

What's your name?

PSYCHE

Psyche.

CIRCE

I've heard of you. Let me see your face.

Psyche rises, wipes dirt off her face.

CIRCE

It's true. You are beautiful. And devout, it would seem.

(beat)

What do you want?

PSYCHE

Nothing.

CIRCE

Nobody cleans a whole temple unless they want something. What is it? More beauty? Revenge? Do you want to turn someone into a pig? That's what I do when I want revenge.

PSYCHE

No.

CIRCE

How about a crone? a monster? An accountant?

PSYCHE

No.

CIRCE

Transformation's my specialty.

PSYCHE

I want Eros.

CIRCE

If you need weapons, you -- oh. EROS. Why? Did the two of you ...? Darling, if I had a dollar for every miserable girl who came sobbing to me after a night with that boy, I'd --

PSYCHE

I'm his wife.

CIRCE

Excuse me?

PSYCHE

He's my husband.

CIRCE

There must be some mistake. Eros would never --

PSYCHE

I'm trying to find my husband.

CIRCE

Your husband Eros. Aphrodite's son, the God of love.

PSYCHE

Yes.

CIRCE

And you're Psyche. Pretty girl, Mortal.

PSYCHE

Like I said --

CIRCE

I'm sorry, I can't help you.

PSYCHE

But I -- there was a misunderstanding. He thinks I betrayed him, but I --

CIRCE

You gotta go.

PSYCHE

I looked at him, I -- can't you turn me into a -- I don't know, a tree or a cloud or something, into the wind, is there any way I can talk to him, change his mind, change his --

CIRCE

I have no say in matters of the heart.

PSYCHE

I love him. I thought I was helping, I thought I was doing what I had to do, I --

CIRCE

Look, Darling. The only one who can help you is Aphrodite, and --

PSYCHE

Whatever it takes.

CIRCE

She's not gonna be psyched to see you -- no pun intended. You seduced her son, betrayed his trust --

Will she see me? PSYCHE

I don't know. CIRCE

Will she help me? PSYCHE

I don't know. CIRCE

Will she -- PSYCHE

Psyche. Go. CIRCE

Psyche exits.

I hope you're stronger than you look. CIRCE

Circe exits.

EROS UNLEASHED

Eros appears. Black trenchcoat.
Automatic rifle.

Eros turns to the audience, pure
destruction.

EROS
Love is losing ten pounds in two days when the woman you
risked everything for betrays your trust.

He aims and shoots.

Love is finding the email to his mistress. Love is falling
hard for her best friend. Love is staying when he can't kick
the meth habit.

He aims and shoots.

Love is Syphillis when she swore she was monogamous. Love is
staying, despite your broken wrist. Love is burying your
second-born child next to your first.

(beat)

May You All Find Love.

Eros opens fire above the crowd. It's every worst nightmare.

APHRODITE

Stop! What are you doing? What have you done?

EROS

I fell in love.

APHRODITE

And were betrayed?

EROS

Nothing should feel like this.

APHRODITE

Oh, my child. Nothing else does.
If anyone can get her back, I can. Who is she.

EROS

Psyche.

Aphrodite pulls away.

APHRODITE

Say that again?

EROS

Psyche.

Aphrodite hurls Eros to the ground.

APHRODITE

Love is an ungrateful son's betrayal!

She picks up his weapon and trains it on him.

Fear and Ego move in.

EROS

Stop. Stop!

Eros scrambles away from Fear and Ego, but they're too fast.

Eros is imprisoned. Fear and Ego stand guard.

APHRODITE

You want to piss off a goddess? Here's how. One. Come to a defenseless mortal in the dark. Two.

Pierce her with desire, twist her guts with lust, turn her head with empty promises, deceive in the name of trust. Three. Deny your heart. Betray yourself. Betray me.

CHILDISH RHYMES

Psyche and Aphrodite enter, separately.
Aphrodite is surrounded by her servants.

PSYCHE

"O Great Goddess, O Wise Ruler of the Heart, I Kneel at your Feet. My Life is Yours, I honor you and beg you grant..."
um..."beg you grant..."

APHRODITE

"The Love I seek."

PSYCHE

Right. Sorry. I've never been good at memorizing --

APHRODITE

Childish rhymes. The lines don't even scan. You mortals and your prayers.

PSYCHE

Please. I need your help.

APHRODITE

Oh?

PSYCHE

I love my husband.

APHRODITE

You mean my son.

PSYCHE

Yes.

APHRODITE

God of Love.

PSYCHE

Yes.

APHRODITE

Whom you betrayed.

PSYCHE

Yes. No, I mean -- All I Did Was *Look*.

(beat)

He came to me every night. I lay naked beside him, skin to skin. I had a right to know.

APHRODITE

You Questioned Love.

PSYCHE

I question everything.

APHRODITE

There can be no love without trust.

PSYCHE

That's it? What about HIM? What about HIS trust? He married me, but he can't trust me? How can I love him if I don't know him? What about *him*?

APHRODITE

Tell me more about Love. See what happens.

(beat)

Love is earned. Do as I say. And we'll see.

PSYCHE

But --. All right.

APHRODITE

You want to appease a Goddess? Here's how. One. Separate my grain. Be sure to count it.

A small amount of grain appears.

PSYCHE

This won't be so hard.

APHRODITE (V.O.)

All my grain.

It becomes clear that Aphrodite has more grain than a person could separate in a lifetime.

Circe enters.

Psyche begins to separate grain.

PSYCHE

One. Two. Three. Four...

Psyche continues separating and counting.

CIRCE

The old "grain" trick?

APHRODITE

That should keep her busy for a while.

A long while.

CIRCE

Mom?

EROS

What is it, my Love?

APHRODITE

How long are you keeping me in here, exactly?

EROS

That prison isn't me, Cupid. It's a cage of your own making.

APHRODITE

It's Eros.

EROS

Speaking of arrows. I was going through some of your old toys and look what I found.

APHRODITE

She produces a bow and arrow set.

Life was simpler, wasn't it?

Eros reaches through the cage to touch them. Aphrodite snatches them away, places them on the ground, out of reach.

You're on your own.

Time passes. Aphrodite watches.

COUNTING ON LOVE

Psyche, still separating grain, speaks.

PSYCHE

8,291,976...8,291,977...

Psyche wails in despair. Eros looks up. Zephyr enters.

ZEPHYR

Damn, she got lungs. You'd think somebody died.

EROS/PSYCHE

I died.

ZEPHYR

Why you gotta go be all melodramatic?

PSYCHE

I've been counting for weeks. No food, no shower, no sleep.
My arms hurt, my back hurts, my fingers keep bleeding.

ZEPHYR

She needs rest.

EROS

She'll be fine.

ZEPHYR

(to Psyche)

You could stop.

PSYCHE

No.

ZEPHYR

Just for a minute.

PSYCHE

The longer I stop, the longer it'll be until I see him.

ZEPHYR

She's mortal, this'll kill her.

EROS

Nobody's forcing her.

ZEPHYR

She's bleeding --

EROS

And I'm burning.

ZEPHYR

She's bleeding for you. How can you watch her suffer like that.

EROS

Love hurts.

ZEPHYR

Then do something.

Eros does something. The grains separate. It's amazing. Psyche turns to Zephyr, astonished.

PSYCHE

Thank Gods.

ZEPHYR

So you DO still love her.

Who said that? EROS

You're helping her. ZEPHYR

Who said I helped her? EROS

So you DON'T love her? ZEPHYR

I'm done with her. EROS

Zephyr exits.

Psyche gives Aphrodite the separated grain. Circe looks on.

APHRODITE

And the rest?
(Psyche gestures to the rest)

Well done. Who helped you.

PSYCHE

Can I see him?

APHRODITE

Isn't that the problem to begin with?

CIRCE

Beg.

PSYCHE

What?

CIRCE

Gods like it when you beg.

PSYCHE

If I could just talk to him, if I could just reason with him...

APHRODITE

This isn't logic, this is love.

PSYCHE

I'll do anything.

APHRODITE

Anything?

CIRCE

Uh-oh.

APHRODITE

Bring me the golden fleece.

PSYCHE

The Golden Fleece?

APHRODITE

If by "The" Golden Fleece, you mean fleece from the ram Chrysollamos, if by "The" Golden Fleece you mean the fleece Jason sought with his Argonauts, if by -- Yes. *The Golden Fleece.*

PSYCHE

Where do I find it?

APHRODITE

That's your problem. Go.

Psyche leaves.

CIRCE

You know, technically, it's not the fleece Jason sought with his Argonauts. THAT fleece was hidden in a tree, the skin from a ram that had already been sacrificed to Zeus by Phrixus as thanks for saving him from --

(beat)

Too much information. Sorry. I just like to be accurate, dramaturgically speaking.

APHRODITE

Close enough.

CIRCE

Popcorn?

Aphrodite and Circe exit.

MY CORONA

Psyche enters. She travels vast distances. Eros watches, bow and arrow in hand.

Zephyr enters in tennis whites.

ZEPHYR

I thought you were done with her.

Eros jumps out of his skin.

EROS

Didn't anybody ever tell you not to sneak up on someone like that?

Psyche reaches a river. On the other side, two rams with golden fleece.

ZEPHYR

I thought you weren't going to help her.

EROS

I'm not.

ZEPHYR

Does she know the rams eat mortals? (Beat) Does she know the river will rise up and swallow whoever wades across? (Beat) Does she know that in the evening, she could pull fleece from the river's reeds in safety?

EROS

No.

ZEPHYR

Sucks to be her. I gotta blow. Have fun "not helping."

Zephyr exits. Eros stares at Psyche. Psyche starts to cross the river.

EROS

Don't!

PSYCHE

Who said that?

EROS

(thinking fast)

The...river reeds. We're highly evolved. Don't try to cross, the current is too strong.

PSYCHE

I have to cross. I have to get the fleece from the rams.

EROS

Those rams will eat you.

Psyche looks at the impossibly cute rams, doubtful.

EROS

Trust me. Us. Trust us.

PSYCHE

I'm not so good with the trust thing.

EROS

So we've heard. Wait until evening. The river runs slower.

PSYCHE

That'll be hours.

EROS

How are you with the "patience" thing?

PSYCHE

What about the carnivorous rams?

EROS

The rams drink from the river. Gather the fleece from the branches.

PSYCHE

Why are you helping me?

EROS

Trust us.

PSYCHE

All right. Tell me when.

Psyche waits. She sighs. She pulls a Corona from her backpack.

EROS

You drink Corona? I -- WE -- thought you drank wine?

PSYCHE

Used to. Corona's good on a hot day.

EROS

Do you still like chocolate? We heard you like chocolate.

PSYCHE

Not so much.

EROS

What's your favorite band?

PSYCHE

Styx.

EROS

I...haven't heard of them.

PSYCHE

What about you?

EROS

Sex Pistols.

PSYCHE

Huh.

EROS

You'd know them if you heard them. We'll make you a mix tape sometime.

PSYCHE

Cool.

The rams exit.

EROS

Well. You can probably cross now.

PSYCHE

Probably?

EROS

You can cross now.

Psyche crosses the river, gathers wool from the thorny reeds. She bleeds.

EROS

Careful! There are thorns.

PSYCHE

It's all right. Thank you for helping me... It was nice talking to you.

EROS

Our pleasure.

Neither wants to leave. Psyche turns. The river is gone. She leaves.

Eros watches her go. Zephyr appears.

EROS

Did you know she liked Prog Rock?

ZEPHYR

Sure.

EROS

How come you never told me --?

ZEPHYR

You never asked.

EROS

What else should I know...?

They exit together, Zephyr the
pontificating professor, Eros the star
pupil.

HELL IS OTHER PEOPLE

Aphrodite enters.

APHRODITE

Aren't we resourceful. Rams not hungry?

PSYCHE

Guess not. I...I want to thank you, O Aphrodite. I...I think I understand why you're having me do these things. It's to learn, isn't it? Patience, and Trust, and how to Listen...this is about teaching me about love, right? You're saying I didn't know what I needed to know before, that I have to earn love, earn your son's trust, I mean, I feel like I'm finally starting to understand. You know? Like I'm reaching this whole new place of Enlightenment and Openness where things are being Revealed, and I'm really ready, I think, to embrace him, and a real Relationship and I just --

APHRODITE

Three tasks.

PSYCHE

What?

APHRODITE

There's a dramatic structure to these things. You have to complete three tasks.

PSYCHE

Oh. All right. I'm ready.

APHRODITE

Go to Hell.

PSYCHE

Excuse me?

APHRODITE

Go to Hell. Take this box to the underworld. Tell Persephone I sent you, tell her to give me more Beauty, and get it back here by tomorrow night.

PSYCHE

But Hell is...the Underworld...is the land of the Dead.

APHRODITE

Don't miss a trick, do you?

PSYCHE

But to visit the land of the dead, you have to cross the River Styx. And to do that, don't you usually have to be...Dead?

APHRODITE

That's the standard method, yes.

PSYCHE

Why are you doing this?

APHRODITE

If I told you I'd have to kill you. That was a joke. Dear. Goddess humor. You could always learn to live without him.

PSYCHE

What would be the point.

APHRODITE

If that's *really* how you feel, then --

Aphrodite holds out the box. Psyche takes it, sinks to the ground. Circe enters.

CIRCE

That's a long trip to make alone.

Doubt and Anxiety appear, flanking her.

APHRODITE

She'll have company.

CIRCE

You have no pity, do you?

APHRODITE

I can't afford to.

CIRCE

You're supposed to make people happy.

APHRODITE

According to whom? What the girl said about enlightenment, Circe...she's not wrong.

CIRCE

Hasn't she gone far enough?

APHRODITE

It's all Transformation, my dear. You have your ways, I have mine.

CIRCE

She'd be better off if I turned her into a frog.

APHRODITE

Maybe so.

CIRCE

Pedicure?

Aphrodite exits. Circe calls after her.

CIRCE

I'll be right there.

PSYCHE

(to Circe)

What does she want to do, destroy me? Oh Gods, that's it, isn't it. What did I ever do to her? It's not my fault people worshipped me for how I looked. It's not my fault her son found me, all I wanted was to know who he was. And all he wanted was what, to put me on another pedestal? I --

CIRCE

Cry me a river.

(beat)

The best things in your life, you've gotten because you're beautiful. And if the worst thing that ever happens to you is that a man leaves you then you are a very lucky girl.

PSYCHE

But all my beauty ever--

CIRCE

He didn't leave you because you're beautiful, darling. He left because you fucked up.

PSYCHE

But he -- wait, how did you --

CIRCE

Okay, you both fucked up. What do you think love is? It's fucking up and getting through it.

PSYCHE

But he lied to me.

CIRCE

He didn't lie. He kept a secret.

PSYCHE

If he loved me, he --

CIRCE

Wouldn't keep a secret?
 (she laughs long and hard)
 You two deserve each other.

PSYCHE

You're as bad as she is.

CIRCE

What would you say? Before, you said all you wanted to do
 was talk to him. What would you say?

PSYCHE

I -- I don't know.
 (Circe turns to go)
 Wait -- I'd...I'd say...

CIRCE

I'll make it easier.

Circe transforms into Eros.

PSYCHE

Eros!

CIRCE-EROS

No.

PSYCHE

Wait.

CIRCE-EROS

"Transformation is my specialty."

PSYCHE

That is so weird.

Psyche approaches, examines Circe-Eros,
 messes with his face.

CIRCE-EROS

Ouch.

PSYCHE

Sorry.

CIRCE-EROS

So what would you say? If he were here?

PSYCHE

I...I still don't know. What are YOU going to say?

CIRCE-EROS

I'll improvise.

PSYCHE

Okay. Um. Give me a minute. I need a "moment before."
Take your entrance again.

Circe-Eros exits and returns...

Psyche stares at the box. (Circe-)Eros enters.

PSYCHE

What are you doing here?

They share a lover's moment -- pure and tender. Psyche breaks away.

PSYCHE

Where the hell have you been?

EROS

Do you like Miles Davis?

PSYCHE

What?

EROS

What about Phillip Glass?

PSYCHE

Who?

EROS

The composer.

Eros gives her a gift, of the "I fucked up so on my way home I got you this at Walgreens" variety.

PSYCHE

You gotta be kidding me. You flew out of our bedroom like our sheets were on fire. I ran after you. I fell...for you. I almost died following you. Your mother is making me go to hell for you and you waltz in here to fix everything with Phillip Glass and cheap chocolate? Where do you get this shit? There's no way you learned this from your mother.

EROS

Can we leave my mother out of this?

PSYCHE

Wasn't that the problem to begin with? Keeping me locked away in a corner of the world, visiting me when nobody was looking, lying to her about me?

EROS

Is that why you're here? To tell me why I suck? Plenty of people can do that. I'm the God of Love, Beautiful. Get in line. 'Cause the list of people who'd die to be with me is --

PSYCHE

Oh, yeah. Play it up, Player. Line'em up. Good fucking luck to the next woman who --

EROS

I didn't hear you complaining. About the palace, about the servants, the wine, the chocolate, the sex...

PSYCHE

The sex was good.

EROS

Good?

PSYCHE

I don't have much basis for comparison. *You*, on the other hand --

EROS

My *point* is that I gave you everything. And you took it. And it wasn't enough.

PSYCHE

How many were there? While we were together? How many since? I want a number.

EROS

I don't have to answer that. *You* betrayed *me*.

Eros starts to leave.

PSYCHE

That's easy, isn't it. I get to you, you leave. Go ahead, run. Fly. Coward.

EROS

I'm not scared of you.

Eros keeps walking.

PSYCHE

You should be.

EROS

Why should *I* / be afraid of *you*.

PSYCHE

Because I know you. I know you, and I love you anyway.

Eros stops.

PSYCHE

I never wanted everything. I wanted you.

EROS

You had me.

PSYCHE

All of you.

Eros leaves. Does he leave his bow and arrow?

Circe enters.

CIRCE

How was that?

PSYCHE

(It was awful)

I don't know. We...never fought before.

CIRCE

Well. Your welcome. I'm late for a pedicure.

Circe exits. Doubt and Anxiety close in. We hear Psyche's heart break. It sounds like Phillip Glass.

LOVER'S LEAP

Psyche climbs to the top of an extremely tall tower. It looks amazing and employs an ingenious stage solution.

Psyche looks down. Psyche steps to the edge of the tower. The wind whistles.

Zephyr appears.

ZEPHYR

What are you doing?

PSYCHE

Saving Aphrodite the trouble. It's what she wants anyway. It's what she's wanted from the beginning. Don't catch me this time. You shouldn't have caught me the first time.

ZEPHYR

You don't mean that.

PSYCHE

I DO mean it.

Doubt circles Psyche.

PSYCHE

Even if I found a way back from the underworld, even if I
appealed Aphrodite, who's to say he'd take me back.

Anxiety circles Psyche.

PSYCHE

He loved me for my beauty and she's destroying it a task at a
time. The rate she's going, I'll have no Beauty left.
Everything that people saw in me --

EROS

That's just the surface.

She starts to jump.

ZEPHYR

There's another way to the underworld.

PSYCHE

What way?

A backdoor to the underworld appears
out of nowhere.

ZEPHYR

It's a shortcut. Visit Persephone, Psyche. Don't drink from
the River Styx. Don't eat anything, especially pomegranate
seeds. Don't look backward. And whatever you do, don't open
the box.

Psyche exits, resolved.

Zephyr joins Eros.

EROS

Thanks.

ZEPHYR

You're my boy.

(beat. Eros looks away)

Didn't want to say anything...but she is lookin' a little
ragged.

EROS

You can't go with her?

ZEPHYR

They're all about fire down there. I'd be outta my element. She'll be fine, bro. All she's gotta do is not look in the box.

EROS

Yeah. Yeah, I guess you're right.

JUST AS YOU ALWAYS SUSPECTED, HELL IS A MALL.

A mall. Techno-Muzak. Jersey Girls and Sephora. Aunt Annie's and Abercrombie.

Psyche enters.

A figure who looks suspiciously like Sister Two approaches with Sbarros.

SISTER TWO

Free sample?

PSYCHE

What is it.

SISTER TWO

Pomegranate Pizza.

PSYCHE

No. No thank you.

A mall security guard approaches with an oar. He looks suspiciously like King. He is the Boatman on the river Styx.

BOATMAN

Can I help you, young lady?

PSYCHE

I'm looking for Persephone.

BOATMAN

And who are you?

PSYCHE

Psyche.

BOATMAN

You're not dead.

PSYCHE

I -- no. I'm not.

BOATMAN

I could have you arrested for trespassing. I could have you escorted from the premises. I could have you consigned to the ninth level of --

(consults his book: Dante's
Inferno)

Oops. Wrong mythology.

(switches books: Hamilton's
Mythology)

I could...make you stay here forever. But first I'd have to make you eat something.

Anxiety and Doubt enter, gorging on
TCBY, Mrs. Fields.

PSYCHE

I don't eat fast food.

BOATMAN

Me neither. That shit'll kill you. Go on, get outta here.

PSYCHE

I can't! Not yet. Please. All I need to do is see Persephone. I came in a back entrance. Nobody needs to know I'm here.

BOATMAN

...Fine.

PSYCHE

How do I find her?

Persephone appears behind an unlabeled but totally recognizable department store counter. She is surrounded by every lotion and potion known to man -- an eternity's worth.

PERSEPHONE

Welcome to the most forgiving place in hell. We've got lotions and potions galore, vitamins to cure what ails you, cremes for age, foundations for any disfiguring burn marks, concealers for any and every type of bruise, permanent eyeliner so you can cry for decades -- give us your worst, we'll do our best.

PSYCHE

I came for Beauty.

PERSEPHONE

(dropping the charm)

Who sent you. Aphrodite?

What did she do with the last batch?

PSYCHE

I don't know.

PERSEPHONE

I should force-feed you pomegranate seeds. Waltzing in here alive, asking for --

PSYCHE

Please. I don't know why she wants it. I've never seen anyone as beautiful as she is.

PERSEPHONE

Look in a mirror lately?

PSYCHE

I...used to be. But I can feel it fading. Please. I need it. I mean, she does...It's the only way she'll help me.

(Persephone raises an eyebrow)

Have you ever been in love?

Persephone cocks her head, considers. Lights a cigarette. Think: mall employee on her coffee break, feeding a tract-home full of kids.

PERSEPHONE

I was in love once. Not at first, but... it just about killed my mother, when I told her I wanted to stay. He's why I'm here.

(beat)

All right.

Persephone reaches under the counter and pulls out a box, ugly and timeworn. On it is written "Beauty."

Give me your box.

Psyche does. Persephone puts her box inside Psyche's.

Don't open it.

PSYCHE

Can I maybe just --

PERSEPHONE

It's unadulterated, 200 Proof Beauty. Way more than a mortal can handle.

PSYCHE

Sure, but like a teaspoonful would be enough to --

PERSEPHONE

Absolutely not. You've got more than I've ever seen, and even so you've only got ten, fifteen proof. This shit will kill you.

PSYCHE

I get it.

PERSEPHONE

Good. Now get out of here.

Persephone, and hell, disappear.

LITTLE BOXES

Psyche is alone with the box.

We don't want her to open the box. And she doesn't -- she is, indeed, stronger than she looks.

Until Doubt, Anxiety, Fear and Ego intervene.

Psyche's strong, but not that strong. She opens the box.

The sound of a life ending. Think: ears ringing on the ride home from a very loud concert.

Psyche falls, dead.

Zephyr enters. Sees her body. Approaches. He kneels over her body, cries.

Eros enters.

EROS

Psyche?

Zephyr looks up. Eros walks to Psyche, holds her in his arms, kisses her. She's still dead.

EROS

What's wrong with her?

ZEPHYR

She's dead.

Eros tries everything to wake up Psyche. Nothing works.

How do we fix it?

EROS

Zephyr shakes his head.

Aphrodite enters.

EROS

What have I done?
What have YOU done?

APHRODITE

My son --

EROS

Bring her back.

APHRODITE

I can't.

EROS

Zeeeeuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuus!

TENNIS, ANYONE?

Zeus appears in the form of the last person you would expect.

ZEUS

What happened here?

Every actor rushes the stage, tells the entire story from their side of the story simultaneously until:

ZEUS

Enough!
(to Aphrodite)
Defend yourself.

APHRODITE

A goddess is not obligated to defend anything. Eros disobeyed my orders. I am not responsible for her death.

EROS

Cut the crap, Mom. She was jealous -- jealous of Beauty, jealous of Youth. Your daughter looked at Psyche and saw everything she'd lost.

ZEUS

You're as beautiful as ever, sweetheart.

APHRODITE

This isn't about Beauty. It's never been about Beauty. It's about Blasphemy. They confused a girl with a god.

ZEUS

Why did you fall in love with the girl?

APHRODITE

He misfired.

ZEPHYR

Wouldn't be the first time.

EROS

You don't understand. For Thousands of years, I've been piercing people through. I thought I knew what I did. This changed everything. How can I cause her pain because you're jealous? How could I feel this and follow your orders?

APHRODITE

It's your job.

EROS

I'm the God of Love.

APHRODITE

Not Love, Eros. Desire. Ten thousand years, my son. Ten times ten thousand conquests, and you still can't tell the difference? You're dopamine, Darling. Novocaine. You take the edge off while I teach the hard lessons of love. The ache of loss, the weight of work, the sting of sacrifice. She, at least, knew that, poor girl. She knew what her love was worth to you, knew without Beauty, nothing would make you stay. Love is what's left when beauty burns away.

EROS

What good does love do her if she's dead?

APHRODITE

One MOMENT of true love is better than a lifetime without it. She knew, when she opened the box, the sacrifice she made. She did it for you.

EROS

But I -- I didn't care that she was beautiful. I did at first, but -- I changed. She changed. *It* changed. Her beauty -- you said it was just on the surface, but it wasn't. It was in her soul, it was...

(To Zeus)

Please. I'll do anything. Bring her back to life.

ZEUS

I can't do that.

EROS

But you make her one of the immortals, right?

ZEUS

I can't do that either.

Beat. The theater magic disappears.
Work lights.

SISTER ONE

What do you mean, you can't.

SISTER TWO

You know how this goes -- you bring her back to life, they have a child, the child's name is Delight.

SISTER ONE

Eros and Psyche, Lust and Soul --

SISTER TWO

It's the beginning of True Love.

SISTER ONE

Why do you think we went through all this? Why did she?

CIRCE

You're Zeus, you can do anything.

ZEUS

Two thousand years ago, maybe. I'm out of practice.

EROS

How can you be out of practice?

ZEUS

These people have so many other Gods.

Images of Google, Time Warner, various labels like Prada, Gucci, etc. Kate Moss. Amy Winehouse. Obama. Cell phones start to go off all over the theater. The sound of NPR and Savage Love and Delilah and Anderson Cooper and Fox News anchors engulf the space.

APHRODITE

What did I tell you?

CIRCE

Then how does it end?

ZEUS

That's a good question.
(beat)

I can't make her one of the immortals. But I can try to make you mortal.

EROS
And bring her back to life?

ZEUS
Maybe.

ZEPHYR
MAYBE? I'm sorry, did you say MAYBE? What is this, some kind of organ transplant?

Eros is silent.

ZEPHYR
What are her chances? If he does it. Seventy-thirty? Sixty-forty?

ZEUS
(To Eros)
There's no way to know.

EROS
But it's the *only* chance.

Silence.

Eros steps forward.

The play resumes. Lights, music.

CIRCE
Gods, it's so romantic. Better to live with her and die than to live forever without her. It's this incredible affirmation of --

EROS
No.

Work lights. House lights. Game over.

APHRODITE
What?

EROS
It's over.

ZEPHYR
But --

CIRCE
But she's dead. You have to bring her back to life. You have to sacrifice yourself to bring her back.

EROS

For what? You just heard him -- there's no guarantee. I could give up everything --

APHRODITE

Not --

EROS

Okay, not everything -- but almost everything. All of who I am. And she could still be dead. And even if she's revived, so what? She could leave me tomorrow. One of us might change.

CIRCE

But you love her.

APHRODITE

Not enough.

EROS

I don't know. Maybe I do now. But I don't know if I will --

APHRODITE

You never know. You have to leap.

EROS

Fine. If you're a god, fine. When mortals leap --

ZEPHYR

They break.

APHRODITE

That's what makes them so beautiful.

CIRCE

So then --

EROS

So.

ZEUS

So I'm done here.

APHRODITE

I guess so.

Zeus exits.

APHRODITE

(To Circe)

Coffee?

CIRCE

Tequila.

Aphrodite and Circe exit.

ZEPHYR

Dude.

EROS

What.

ZEPHYR

You're really just gonna -- Maybe they're right, all the things they say about you.

EROS

It's not that I don't love her. I do.

ZEPHYR

Save it. A love story for the ages, that's how they billed you two.

EROS

Maybe next time.

ZEPHYR

Are you so sure there'll be a "next time?"

Zephyr starts to leave.

EROS

Hey!

ZEPHYR

What?

Beat.

EROS

Tennis Tuesday?

ZEPHYR

Maybe next time.

Zephyr exits. Eros stands alone with Psyche's dead body.

EROS

I'm sorry. You can go now. There's nothing left to see.

THE END