

Fall of the Gods

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The seating should be set as a Greek amphitheatre looking down on a large round private table at a restaurant and a young waiter is setting the places. He is wearing a shirt tie and waist coat, he looks like an average waiter. The room looks like it has seen better days it's out-dated and looks like it probably did 20 years ago. A waiter stands behind a small bar he is polishing glasses when he speaks he addresses the audience directly working like an ancient Greek chorus

Waiter: we get all sorts in here, city type's, bankers mostly, all suits and mobile phones. They do more drinking than eating, bottle after bottle, mostly red sometimes white never rosé. They will have a starter, then start drinking and hardly touch the main course when its cost them £30. Oh well, at least they pay. Always with flash card which have some kind of shiny metal involved platinum, gold, sometimes silver and they tip well which is never bad. Then we have the dates; old couples who come in every year on their anniversary order the same thing and don't talk from sitting down till they pay the bill, and look daggers at each other from starter to the mint at the end. First dates are more fun, I believe I have been present during more first dates then any man on earth - and I can normally spot the ones that are going to have the cinema date and the ones that will never talk again. *[He stops polishing and contemplates for a minute]* tonight is to be by far the strangest night in all the years that the Taste of Athens has been open... I can't see the future or anything like that. But I can tell, I've got a feeling, you see; that tonight is going to be a strange night. When you come into work and the booking form says event, meeting of the gods, and the customer has put his name as Zeus, King of the gods. You know you're in for a strange night.

A crash thunder sound he looks around shrugs and goes around to set the table. A woman enters she is demure in plain clothing but carry's a power that makes people want to look at her and trust her she is Athena goddess of war and wisdom

Athena: Good evening. Am I the first to arrive?

Waiter: I do believe so madam, could I get you a drink or would you like to wait for the rest of your party to arrive?

She looks around

Athena: I will wait

[Pause]

Waiter: Have you travelled far?

She smiles but offers no reply

Waiter: Shame about the weather can I take your coat?

She takes off her coat and passes it to him. he takes it. He feels it... it's not wet he gives a puzzled look then exits as a man enters the man wears a light blue suit that shows no sign of the increasing rain outside he is Poseidon god of the sea he moves with arrogance and contempt for everything around him, he is a humourless presence with eyes like cold metal, he is stiff and unyielding with an air of high ranking military about him. He and Athena hold each other's eyes for a long time neither looking away

Athena: Poseidon?

Poseidon: Athena... You look different this time

Athena: You look, almost the same

They continue to study each other. The waiter enters

Waiter: Good evening, sir may I take your coat?

Poseidon: You may not

Waiter: *[not in the least taken back]* May I show you a menu?

Poseidon: You may not. In fact until our whole party arrives I don't wish to have to answer anyone's questions

Athena says nothing but looks slightly amused the waiter exits

They take seats both facing the door the sound of rain gets heavier, the door opens and a woman enters she is bone dry and exquisite in a short black dress high heels and a wrap covering her shoulders, she is Aphrodite goddess of love and passion, she takes in the room and flashes a radiant smile at the two people sat at the table

Aphrodite: Hello old friends. it's been too long. Poseidon, Athena, it is wonderful to see you

Athena: Aphrodite, still favouring the young and beautiful I see

Aphrodite looks down at herself and smiles

Aphrodite: And why wouldn't I? If I had to wake up every morning and look at someone that wore, well, what you're wearing, I would pray for a new rapture

Athena takes this in good humour

Aphrodite: It looks like we are still waiting for a few. Tell me Poseidon are your brothers ever on time

Poseidon: No

Aphrodite: It seems the years have not changed your conversation skills

Poseidon: No, they haven't

Aphrodite takes off her wrap and sits with her back to the door

Aphrodite: Do you think he will come this time?

They all look at each other

Aphrodite: He can't. Not four times in a row

Poseidon: He can do as he likes, we are his to command

The door opens and a man enters, he is dressed in a t-shirt and jeans, casual yet stylish. He has an easy smile and gives an air of charm and charisma, he is Hades god of the underworld, the dead and regret.

Hades: Speak for yourself, brother. I say if he doesn't come this time I, for one, will never respond to his summons again

Aphrodite: Hades, now there is a face I recognise. Television, film, radio I see you or hear you in one way or another every day and never guessed. I even spoke to you at a party a year ago and I never knew

Hades: Hiding in plain sight, my darling. Athena

Athena: Hello uncle

Poseidon: You would defy our brother and king

Hades: Hello to you as well, mighty Poseidon

Poseidon: I do not come here to be mocked by you brother

Hades: No, you come here for the fine wine and dazzling conversation

Poseidon: I come here because—

Hades: You come here because our brother commands it. I know you said the same last time, and the time before that, ever the soldier

Poseidon: *[getting angry]* And what are you this time? Another whore to— this system

Aphrodite: Excuse me but I'm the whore here, and why are you any different?

Poseidon glowers at her

Athena: Shall we sit? And have a drink while we wait

The waiter enters

Waiter: Are you ready to order?

Athena: We are still waiting on members of our party. We would like drinks, a bottle of white and red the house will be fine, thank you

Waiter: Very well, madam

The Waiter takes the napkins from the glasses and retreats behind the bar. He reappears with two bottles and places them on the table, Athena begins to pour and the scene freezes. The waiter come forward and addresses the audience

Waiter: Told you it was going to be strange didn't I, ok so you might need a bit of catching up. Do you ever wonder why the stories of the Greek gods just stopped? Some people think it was because people just realised it was all a load of shit, and they became myths. But what if they were never myths? What if it all happened? Poseidon; ruled the sea, Hades; the underworld. A female 'god of war' and the 'king of the gods' that would fuck

anything that cast a shadow as a swan or a golden shower which in this day has a completely different meaning. What if they not only existed but had all the powers that the myths say they had, and used them. Fought against each other and generally fucked about with the humans, like the cress pieces in Jason and the Argonauts. What if it was all true? Where have they been you might ask? Good question, the answer is the Trojan War. If people don't know about that then read about it, don't watch the film 'Troy' with Brad Pitt, not because it's a bad film, but it's nothing like it actually happened. The gods took sides and fucked everything up, so when the war ended with the horse and all that. Zeus decided that it was time to take a step back and let the humans have a go without the gods interference. So he reduced their powers and made them live amongst the humans to humble them and for them to learn. They live mortal lives then they die and are reborn with the memory of who they are, and they can shape their life accordingly. Every 500 years Zeus summons them to see if the gods are ready to reclaim the place in Olympus and rule the humans once more... If he ever turns up

The scene reanimates everybody is in silence as Athena pours, when she finishes she looks around for a while then tries to break the tension

Athena: 500 years and we sit in silence Uncles. Aphrodite we once ruled the same kingdom can we not have a meal and talk of fonder times without crossed words?

They all look at her, Hades with slight amusement Poseidon with distain and Aphrodite with puzzlement

Aphrodite: I forget sometimes

Athena: Forget what?

Aphrodite: That you are his daughter

Athena: I was born fully formed, from his head. I am not likely to forget, he would never have stood for silence amongst his kin

Hades: He would be thunder bolts and booming voice commanding us, politics was never my brother's thing. If he couldn't fuck it or command it he would lose interest very quickly. Unlike you who makes a point of making a difference, with that calming voice and patient way. Tell me when did the god of war spend most of her time suing for piece

Poseidon makes a grunt of unapproved distaste

Athena: Something to say uncle?

Poseidon: I do. I should have been the good of war. If I would have been then these past 2000 years would have never have happened and we would be gods still

Aphrodite: Oh! Interesting. *[she leans in closer]* Please tell us why?

Poseidon: It was the called the Trojan War— War! As 'god of war' it lay with you. You gave the humans too much free choice and let other gods interfere—

Athena: You interfered

Poseidon: Only when they entered my domain

Athena: Do all of my fellows feel this way?

*They sit in silence till the waiter comes with menus he hands them out everybody takes one
Aphrodite stops him as he turns to leave*

Aphrodite: Tell me my good man, are you from this country?

Waiter: I— wasn't born here. No, madam

Aphrodite: Madam? Oh, how waiters flatter. Tell me do you know any of us?

Waiter: I do, I know you and this gentleman from magazines, although you are wearing a lot more clothing than I'm used to seeing you in

Aphrodite: Thank you, these others are also in magazines, but clearly not the ones you read. Tell me what religion do you follow?

Waiter: Follow?

Hades: She means what is your religious belief?

Waiter: Well I have none, really. I was christened but I don't go to church or anything

Aphrodite: So a Christian?

Waiter: I guess so

Aphrodite: Good! Tell me, what your god looks like? I will bet that as soon as I said that a man on a cloud with a big beard came into your mind, and why not? You have been fed this image since before you knew what it was. Can you tell me, what the leading environmentalist lawyer in this country looks like, or maybe the admiral of the fleet in the royal navy?

Poseidon: Stop this. This arrogant, juvenile showing off

Aphrodite: I was only playing. *[she touches the waiters arm]* You didn't mind

Hades: But, he wasn't the one you were playing with was he?

Athena: Some time please, so we can spare you being involved with our dispute

Waiter: Certainly

Waiter Exits

Athena: Did you enjoy that?

Aphrodite: I did, it is fun with the young ones. Not nearly as fun as with you two. 2000 years and neither of you have grown a sense of humour. Every lifespan doing the same thing, leading men to war or trying to save the planet. 2000 years and I sit and discuss our assent, with times greatest mass murderer and the woman that is fighting the stupidest battle; on the face of this doomed earth. At least I don't make excuses for what I am. I am a whore and a user of the opposite sex. I enjoy indulgence, the finest wines food and company. I have dined with aristocracy, laid with kings... and queens, started revolutions—

and ended them. I have stood with saints and monsters. I have fucked poets and rock stars. all of this I have done with a smile on my face and red lipstick, and you two judge me

Hades: I judge you as well, but not as harshly. Why, I do agree that my niece and brother have the joint personality of a garden snail. They do serve a certain purpose, they give the mortals something to do. I will say and have stated in one of the books that I have written; that 'people need something to keep their minds off how unimportant they actually are'. So the biggest distraction is a threat, war! What is it good for? Everything. Be it against the men with the big guns or the men with the big oil drills, it doesn't matter. Anything that keeps their tiny minds away from the fact that they are small and inconsequential makes this world spin, and these mortals happy

Poseidon: And what do you do. While we war and try to make a difference?

Hades: Why, I watch and I write the truth. Which they call fiction, but one day will be called the true bible, and it will have been written by the god of the underworld. Oh, I do love irony and so I should

Poseidon: A millennia and still the spoilt, insolent, ungrateful player of minds and emotions. The only irony is that you are my brother and I can't decimate you, and see you writhe in the pain that you so like to cause others. To do to you physically what you like to do mentally, to—

Hades: Do keep talking brother, I know you like to hear yourself now that you have people to listen, instead of fish

Poseidon stands

Poseidon: Would you have spoken to *him* as such, you would be dead where you stand

Hades: I did once, and he thought that a suitable punishment was ruling the underworld. I wonder if I would have tried to kill him what penance I would have received? Maybe Helen of Troy as my personal concubine?

Aphrodite: A strange sense of justice our god of gods has, and a terrible keeper of time he's only 2000 years late

Athena: A blink of an eye to the deities that we were, but 43,545,600,000 seconds in this world. We have felt every one of them in this semi mortal way he makes us live, so his sense of justice is to make us suffer

Hades: A mortal man once said that repeating an activity the same way and expecting different results was the definition of insanity. So, Athena, why do you and my brother here feel the need to do the same thing over and over again? Has it worked? Has this cruel punishment finally taken its toll and done the job it was intended to do?

Poseidon: Will you speak plainly, or not at all

Athena: I think what he means to say is; are we succumbing to the madness that this is supposed to cause. Which, judging by the emptiness of the table, all of our fellow gods have

Hades: Very astute. Tell me, do you have an idea of why our other deities do not appear when summoned?

Athena: Because they have given up. They either now lead mortal lives or—

Hades: They choose to die in infancy

Poseidon: And you think that I would take that cowardly why out!

Hades: Mighty Poseidon, never. wise Athena— maybe

They all look at Athena the waiter enters not looking at the table and not feeling the atmosphere hanging in the room

Waiter: Ladies and gentlemen, have you made a decision?

He sees the faces of the people at the table looks as if he is about to say something then exits there is silence

Aphrodite: Oh, the tension, she looks like she knows what he's talking about, don't you think

Poseidon: She does, I don't like being kept in the dark

Hades: Would you like to?

Athena just keeps steering at Hades

Poseidon: Will one of you talk!

Hades: Well, 2000 years is a good amount of time to think, which is something I do a lot. When I'm not thinking about notoriety or my own gain I do spare some time contemplating our ascension back to gods. Which, I am sure all of us including those not here today have done. It is the gods who stopped answering the summonses that took up a lot of my thinking in the last 500 years. Originally I thought, like Athena had, that they had just given up. Then I thought of the penance; to live amongst the humans that we once ruled to humble us to their existence. It accrued to me that maybe some of my fellows have caught on to the same way of thinking and decided that the penance decreed by my brother was that we should not only take no part in the evolution of man, but we should become them, and live normal lives. Which sounds dull and enough like torture to be true. I know you have thought this Athena but has it crossed either of your minds at all— apparently not

Aphrodite: If this is what you think, why are you still here?

Poseidon: Because, as ever, he does not know if he is right. So, he waits and watches, planting this information to see what we will do. I have seen this tactic. You imply an absurd idea with just enough plausibility to make the weak minded think it could be true, then you leave them to think that it is the only possibility

Hades: That county has weapons of mass destruction, war is the only option. Well played brother, it takes a trickster to see one.

Poseidon: Turning water into wine, I take it that was something to do with you as well?

Hades: I am touched that you would have guessed that. I was there, but I can't take all the credit. Getting movie stars to follow the innate scribbling's of a below average science fiction writer— that was all me

Poseidon: Being a god yourself, I have never seen the attraction of convincing them there are false gods when you know the truth

Hades: Because it's fun. You may as well just say thank you and be done with it

Poseidon: And why would I thank you?

Hades: Religion has caused more wars than anything else. Effectively I have kept you in business for the last 2000 years, and you are welcome

Poseidon: Is that what you think of me? All of you, that I am some unrelenting war monger, who wants nothing more than to see people die. This is the role I play because I know nothing else. I was raised to follow and that's what I did. I followed orders and never failed. I was the king of my domain, answerable only to one. Now I lead completely, but still only because he banished us, I am still loyal. The only soldier he has left, and in 500 years if I am the only one to answer his command, he will know that I am still truly his loyal subject and reward me justly. Now I will leave. *[he stands]* I hope that in 500 years, I will not see any of you

Poseidon starts to leave

Athena: Before you leave, may I say my piece?

Poseidon stops at the door thinks for a short time then nods curtly

Athena: You all know my father, all of you have known him for longer than I. I am sure all of you think you know him the best and the best way to please him. Have you ever thought that he is not the one we need to please? That maybe we were put here for them, to help them, and the world that we inhabit with them. That to live amongst them and to feel their pain we would try to help them, instead of playing with their lives as we did from the top of Olympus. I was the god of war and wisdom. These years have taught me that I have nothing but contempt for both. For in this world, someone will always lose in order to win a war. Some must lose, even in a worthy cause. Having the wisdom to see that in the end there will be no winner and we will all lose eventually, what will become of us then? Reincarnation, as the only 4 beings on earth; an eternity of nothing. I will not believe that. so please join me and help mankind so that we can guide them, instead of rule them, as we were supposed to do in the first place

Poseidon: No, keep your wisdom, your mind games, and your love of these mortals. I am a god and shall not act otherwise

Poseidon exits

Hades: Well played Athena, you almost had me giving you a whole hearted cheer. I'm sure Aphrodite was stifling a tear or two, but I think I know this game you are playing

Athena: I am playing no game

Hades: Oh, I believe you. You want us to go off and live normal lives. So that in 500 years' time, you can answer the summons and be the only one to be here. Then he thinks you are the only one that still does his bidding. Very shrewd. I am almost proud [*he stands*] but, I will be here again, and again, if needs be. We will return to the life we once lead and I do intend to be there when we do

Hades exits

Aphrodite: Just us girls

Athena: So it seems

Aphrodite: If it makes you feel better, I think your right

Athena: Do you?

Aphrodite: I do— I may be a whore but I am not stupid

Athena: Will you be here next time we are summonsed?

Aphrodite: Oh yes. you see, unlike your uncles, who waste these years waiting, watching and trying to find a way back. I am quite content with this world. I love the people in it, and they love me. Why would I want to return to being a god, when I am treated like one anyway?

Athena: Then why do you still come?

Aphrodite: He always summons when I have nothing else better to do. All your wisdom and grace, what keeps you coming back, when you clearly think you have the answer?

Athena: Hope

Aphrodite: Something you once put in a box for a lady named Pandora. Hope mixed with all the suffering of the world. Greed, envy and all the rest. You are the reason that the human race continues, but I don't think that makes you happy. I don't think you are proud. You feel guilty, that's why you try to save the world, because you hate what you helped build

Athena has lost all composure she is physically affected by the truth she stands and exits leaving Aphrodite alone she does not look happy about what just happened she has a moment stands

Aphrodite: And thus Olympus has fallen, long may they rest

She exits

The waiter enters he looks like he is about to talk then sees the room empty

Waiter: They didn't even drink the wine

He starts to clear the table Aphrodite enters unseen by the waiter

Aphrodite: I am sorry, I forgot my wrap— did you hear all of that?

Waiter: Sorry madam?

Aphrodite: Please, I know men, I know them better than they do. I have touched countless men and they have touched me. Some I forget some are harder— as soon as I touched your arm [*she touches him again*] I knew, you were listening at the door all night. Will you tell me, Zeus are any of us right?

Zeus: No

Aphrodite: Would it matter if we were right?

Zeus: No

Aphrodite: Will we ever return?

Zeus: No. Not yet anyway

Aphrodite: There it is hope again

Zeus: But not for you

Aphrodite: I don't think I had any from the beginning. Have you always done this?

Zeus: The only way to be present without actually being here. It's the best way to learn

Aphrodite: And what have you learnt?

Zeus: That they are not ready. They— you live amongst them, but not with them. You order, manipulate and still try to rule them. They are better than us, but none of you see it, and never will. I know you are happy with the path you have chosen. I no longer rule so you may leave here and do as you please

Aphrodite: Choice... that's it... isn't it

Zeus: You will believe that it is, but I am not telling if it is or isn't

Aphrodite goes to leave

Aphrodite: For a god to fall they must do so of their own free will?

Zeus: You should write that down

THE END

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