

Epílogos

(A man stands in the midst of the Temple of Zeus – or rather what remains of it. The once triumphant and vast structure has been whittled down to nothing more than greyed, hollow skeleton of its former self. An obnoxious yellow tour bus is parked not far from it – across the side are the words “ATHENS ADVENTURES”. The scene is dimmed, dark, all except for one light that shines down on the central figure of this sorry tale.)

(It is ZEUS, god of gods. He is, however, no longer the Romantic portrait of a deity. His physique has been dwindled into a pathetic, saggy form. His beard, once flowing and elegant, has been reduced to a scraggly, tangled mess. He has traded his toga for a cheap, yellow windbreaker and a pair of ragged blue jeans. He looks about him, surveying what remains of his domain.)

ZEUS

(Aside.) There used to be places for me in this world. In the densely peopled markets of Corinth. Amongst the intellectuals atop the Athenian acropolis. In the council chambers of the megarons of Olympia. On the faces of mortal pretenders as they strutted about the amphitheater in honor of Dionysus. You know, their reverence for him still vexes me after all these years. If I had known all I had to do to gain the undying admiration of these mortals was to give them fermented berries and then lounge in my chair all day, I wouldn't have bothered with the whole rain business.

I was welcomed into wood and mud homes and the stony, storied halls of palaces: both commoner and king alike knelt to my presence. I used to be able to stride in as I pleased –

though not often in the form I preferred; when you're married, discretion with these things is often wisest. I adopted the guise of bull, a swan, or a pigeon. I even took the form of an ant once, and I am admittedly still astonished I was able to lie in bed with Eurymedousa. I suppose my charm knows no bounds.

(He smiles, stroking his beard as he reminisces. The smile fades, and he touches one of the broken columns.)

All the doors in Greece were open to my presence. It was my right, and none dared deny me that respect. But now – who opens the door for the forgotten? My domain, once as vast as the heavens, only exists behind glass panes. Or places like this.

(Zeus spreads his arms out, as though to take in the entirety of building.)

This. This place was a beacon once. It was built and rebuilt by devoted hands. Of course, it was not as pristine in its design as I would have expected, but I am not without gratitude. I gave them the opportunity to fix it and only had a single architect struck down for the shoddy design. Let their textbooks say now that I'm "callous".

(He strokes his beard as he paces the across the columns.)

In hindsight, I may have been too lenient. The maintenance here has been horrendous. The stucco has chipped away from the limestone and the stone has crumbled away from itself. It seems time saw fit to renovate the roof, and I must say that I am not a fan of the 'open air' approach.

(He exhales a deep, weary sigh.)

It's moments like this where I find that, despite all he's done, I do miss my father. He was about as pleasant as skinny dipping in the maw of Scylla, but he was someone I could go to and complain about the machinations of his creation. What absurdity it is that the king of all things is beholden to the clock! I suppose it truly is an ingenious invention in that way; he can be locked away for all eternity and his creation will still enact his revenge upon all of his children.

Perhaps he's having a laugh down there with my brother. Relishing in my misery, forgetting that my grievances are just as much theirs. "Look at how the might hath fallen", they'd say – or something as clichéd and tired as that.

(He chuckles bitterly.)

ZEUS

My brother was so thespian; I blame the mortals for encouraging that in him. How they pity him so in their soppy dramas. I'm sure his manner has rubbed off on my father. I have half a mind to go down there and gently remind them that their precious waterway is as dead as its former detritus, and the only company that my brother receives anymore is our cannibal father, a bunch of withered, bitter old philosophers and muses stuck spinning the same yarns they spun millennia ago. Oh, and I suppose he has his mutt. Mutts? Mutt. I never parsed out if that dog was a singular or a plural. I suppose it wouldn't hurt to go and ask sometime. It has been a while since we've spoken.

(A GROUP OF TOURISTS enters the scene. They're led by a TOUR GUIDE, a woman closer to 50 than 40 and with an unignorable red rash on her face. She doesn't even bother to smile. She doesn't even remember the last time she smiled. Why should she smile, anyway? They certainly aren't paying her enough to smile. After what must have been the hundred-and-fourth, hundred-

and-fifth time she has went through this, the fire she once had has since extinguished into cold, dead ash.)

TOUR GUIDE

The statue of Zeus was built around 435 BC. It was chryselephantine sculpture. Does anyone know what that means?.

ZEUS

Wait. At last, somebody speaks my name! Who has come to pay their respects to my magnificence?

TOUR GUIDE

That's right. It was made of gold and ivory. Very grand.

ZEUS

Ah. She's—older than I would have preferred. I also could do without that rash on her face.

Reminds me a bit of Medusa – after my daughter got her, I mean. Well, as they say, ‘beggars cannot be choosers’. No. No, what am I saying? I am no beggar. I should demand more than this!

(Beat.) But this one did have the sense to bring followers with her. Perhaps it would be hasty of me to discard her so quickly.

(The tour group shuffles by, paying no mind to the god in their midst.)

ZEUS (cont.)

Wait, where are they going? I'm right here you fools! I don't believe this. They just walked right past me, like I was ether! Do they not see me?

(Beat.) No. No, of course not. My appearance isn't at its most ideal. I had to scrap the toga; the people had such an unpleasant reaction to it. When I explained myself, they felt more inclined to send their medicine men after me than extend their praise. No, it's better this way. Better that they do not know me now.

TOUR GUIDE

Zeus's statue would have stood—

(She lazily waves to the portion of the temple which lacks even a foundation at this stage.)

-about there.

ZEUS

I hear it again. They speak the word of my name. It once had weight. It could strike and silence the room. Leave the strong trembling with the meek.

My name used to be thunder.

So how do they find the audacity to speak in such disgraceful tones now? So artificial – so bored. It passes barely heeded through a chain of ears as a tired woman in a button-down lazily directs them through the pillars. And that child – look up, damn you!

(Said CHILD of the tour group stares blankly into the screen of their phone, entirely detached from their surroundings. A plastic cup rests in the child's other hand.)

You're in the house of greatness! Look upon my works, ye miniscule! Despair! Despair a little bit, at least.

(The child proceeds to take a sip of his plastic cup, only to find it empty.)

What I wouldn't give to smite just one. Especially that child –

(The child tosses the cup aside, onto the floor.)

--Don't drop your cup there! Do you not see the trash receptacle!?

(Zeus sighs.)

What can I do? My tools do not heed my call. I can't hold a spark between my fingers. The heavens are as bright and blue as though all was well. Does it not see me? Will you not send a cloud to me, old friend?

(Zeus looks up to the sky, waiting for a sign. It does not come.)

(Beat.) Ingrates.

TOUR GUIDE

Zeus was the chief of the Greek Pantheon. He was god of the sky.

ZEUS

(Aside). And listen to her! Their leader, their – historian. Such a crude language.

TOUR GUIDE

He became king of the gods after winning a war against the titans – big fellas that came before the gods. He sealed them away in Tartarus, which is basically Greek hell. Pretty cool.

ZEUS

“Tar-tear-us?” They dare strut into my domain and have the audacity to butcher these words like meat to a kraken? Do they deliberately seek to torment me? And is that one—

(A member of the tour group spits gum onto the temple floor. Zeus's eyes grow wide, and the lights illuminate the full stage.)

ZEUS (cont.)

- you dare spit pink mush onto my domain!?

(The tour group stops. All of the members of the group stare at Zeus. He is no longer speaking to himself.)

TOUR GUIDE

Can I—help you, sir?

(Zeus takes in a sharp inhale.)

ZEUS

It is Tar-*tar*-us. Not Tar-*tear*-us.

TOUR GUIDE

Excuse me?

ZEUS

You heard me, Mortal! And my statue wasn't 'over there'!

(Zeus waves to the direction the Tour Guide had waved to earlier.)

It didn't exist in some nebulous space! It was there!

(Zeus now points in that same direction.)

And it was tall! Not as tall as it could have been, of course, budgetary restraints you understand. Nonetheless it was a proud sculpture of gold, ivory, and fine gemstones! It was glorious!

TOUR GUIDE

Well, okay sir. I'm going to have to ask you to-

ZEUS

Silence, mortal! You come into *my* home, speak of *my* history as though you were reading a list for market, mispronounce the name of a domain I worked *very* hard to get those 'big fellows' trapped in, and worst of all you allow *that creature* –

(Zeus points to the child in the group.)

-to dispense of his gunk and detritus upon this ground! Have some decency!

(A large security guard steps in, putting a shoulder on Zeus's back.)

SECURITY GUARD

Sir, I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

ZEUS

No!

SECURITY GUARD

(The security guard pulls out a taser.)

SECURITY GUARD

Sir. If you don't leave, I'm going to have to taser you. Do you understand?

ZEUS

I will not yield to you, mortal! I will stand by no longer!

(A terrible rumble echoes across the sky, building with Zeus's fury.)

ZEUS (cont.)

Hear me now! I am Zeus! Chief among the gods! You will not dismiss me! You will not belittle me! And you will address me with the respect that I am owed, or by the pits of Tar-tear-us, I shall chain you to a mountain and have the vultures peck your--

(The guard fires the taser. Zeus stares at the guard, unflinching. He leans forward, then falls over like a board.)

SECURITY GUARD

Nothing to see here! Please move along!

(The tour group goes on, leaving the two behind. The lights dim once more, a single light shining down on Zeus.)

ZEUS

(Aside.) I just don't understand. My coming was heralded, feared by titans. I brought the rain. I brought the lightning. I brought forth a pantheon! Which, granted, was perhaps not always for the best, but nevertheless, this world would be nothing without me! And yet it goes on! And on. And on. Without me. Can this be how it all ends? After everything? It just doesn't make sense. It just—doesn't make sense.

(The guard hoists Zeus onto his feet. He raises his head to the audience.)

(Beat.) Spare a prayer, mortal?