

PRIAPUS AGONISTES

Mary Reid Kelley, 2013

SCENE I: The Knossos Presbyterian Fellowship Gymnasium

CHORUS: (Miss Barley, Miss Millet, and Miss Spelt call the game)

Apeneck Doctor crouches, strains,
The Dentists rally to a spot,
The Lawyers busy a reply,
Their welted forearms wipe and swat.

Accountant's mottled cheeks convulse
While calculating swift ellipse,
Backpedaling to avoid disgrace,
A City council member slips.

The Philosophers curse Ba'al and Christ,
The Vintners spit their red disgust
Upon the hardwood court and shout:

PLAYER:

"Bring off the bench Young Priapus!"

CHORUS:

Behold! God chooses from the ranks
His Word made Flesh, and Flesh says:

PRIAPUS:

Thanks.

CHORUS:

The congregation's eyes absorb
His grace. He gently lofts the orb:

WRATH FALLS! It shatters Deacon's nose!

No surgeon's skill can reconstruct
It. Priapus exults! He knows
The Presbyterians are fucked.

REFEREE:

The Baptists lead the set, five-oh!

CHORUS:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

REFEREE:

Resume selection for the Labyrinth!

CHORUS:

Praise Him you creatures here below.

SCENE 2: The Labyrinth under the Gymnasium

THE MINOTAUR: (urgently searching)

To those who say I soil the halls
Of my own house: you lie. I have
Facilities designed for my
Relief somewhere nearby. A lavatory

Whose entrance is so genteel,
So subtly tucked into the walls,
That even I must marvel at the skill
Of Daedalus. I do not shit the halls.

Not often. My mother was a queen,
So it is fitting that the house is quite
Extensive. It's full of costly offerings
Left by my zealous acolytes.

[The Minotaur removes a watch from an arm bone and puts it on]

As object of their cult, I fondly
Tolerate this messy streak
As part of their redemption process.
We start by playing hide and seek,

And when I find them, they throw their shoes
In honor of my presence. We run a race
And then, with regal ceremony,
I give them my unique embrace.

And then they decorate my house,
Providing guidance as I prowl the gloom,
Posing questions to them such as "So,
Which hallway leads me to the Bathroom?"

SKULL:

It will reveal itself if you run straight
Into that wall of cinder blocks!

[The Minotaur drops the Skull and runs, **WHACK!** into the wall]

THE MINOTAUR: (woozily)

I need their help, because my jaws
Are clamped on greatness, chewing clocks

Until the bitter time dissolves
Into the stars which is the spittle
On my chin. Which hall is this?
Only little minds retain the little

[The Minotaur gets up, examines the writing on the Labyrinth wall]

Differences. They do the chore
Of setting letters next to one another.
Gods do not interpret trivia.
Besides, it's praise of me, I gather.

[The Minotaur examines graffiti of Pasiphaë and Ariadne]

I do admire their attempts to draw
My family. I've even made a game
Called "Ariadne Comes To Visit."
My refined accent on her name (**HONK**)

Marks us as sisters, but here's a case
When one child's handsome, and one's not.
As the midwife pulled me from
My mother, she said,

MIDWIFE: (holding infant Minotaur between Pasiphaë's knees)
"I bet this will be a sore spot!"

THE MINOTAUR:

Soothingly I say, "My dear,
How well you have concealed your goiter!
And your lack of horns is almost hidden
Beneath that braided wig—there's none adroiter

Than you in the cosmetic arts.
I admire your persistence. Say,
Are courtly fashions still set by
Our mother, fair Queen Pasiphaë?

SCENE 3: The Minoan Palace. Pasiphaë suns herself in a swimsuit.

THE MINOTAUR continues:
Catching rays beneath a trellis,

Her beauty made fair Venus jealous!

VENUS: (seen from behind, holding a mirror)

Nice tan. Better check it.

[Venus **ZAPs** Pasiphaë with a curse]

PASIPHAË:

Ow. You Bitch!

VENUS: (reveals face, is a dog):

I'd like to give you endless itch and peeling,
But epidermal torment has a ceiling,
For flesh is fleeting, and that burn will fade
Your forecast, mortal, calls for shade.

PASIPHAË:

Oh, Weather Girl, are you still kvetching
Because I'm stunning- and you're just...fetching?

[Pasiphaë throws a bone to Venus, who catches it in her mouth, snarling.]

VENUS:

You owe that pretty face to me.
And I've shared my secrets: skincare is the key!
Willow BARK! BARK! BARK! for thick eyelashes,
Collagen to smooth skin's RUFF! RUFF! patches.

PASIPHAË:

Venus, you're half-shill, half-shell;
A fallen Avon goddess who can't sell
Beauty to a pig. Your crap lip glosses
Didn't put me on the throne of Knossos.
You can legislate against crow's feet,
But since I am the Queen of Crete,
I still insert my clause in every handsome Bill I meet.
That's how my laws are framed.

VENUS:

Forgetful protege, I'm also famed
For mental penetration. I know the route
Into your ear to fuck your brains out.
And while I'm there, perhaps I'll carry
Your preference for Dick, to something more Harry.
Since your attitude weaves daily proof
That your woof is warped; your warp is WOOF!!

PASIPHAË: (walking away in a dismissive attitude)
I'd be frightened, Dear Venus, but your Uncle Hades said:

HADES: (with Persephone, both dog-faced and barking)
Listen, faint heart never won feral ladies!

[Persephone howls]

PASIPHAË:
There's something else we must discuss:
He said you like to Mount Olympus.
But submit to me; and we won't break up.
You play saucer, I'll play teacup.

VENUS:
Well, your china shop will take new dynamics
When I put a Bull in your ceramics. (**ZING**)

[Venus curses Pasiphaë, who sees the Cretan Bull for the first time]

We have our beef! And I am vowed,
Proud Pasiphaë, to make you cowed.

PASIPHAË: (leaning over a split-rail fence and speaking in a daze to the Bull)
What are you, love? A puzzle sworn
To charm me? Has the perfect man been born
As a dilemma crowned with perfect horns?
Don't answer! Stop your noble jaws.
Don't speak to me of Nature's laws
That seek to part our hearts because
I have not cloven feet. I mean
To get some footwear that behooves a queen!
(hoists leg up onto fence)

VENUS:
Yeah, show us your calves.

PASIPHAË:
Thank you Venus, I have seen
True beauty, and I won't go back!
Daedalus, I need some tack.

[Daedalus enters, takes notes]

Build me a decoy with a padded rack

And wheels, so I can slide inside,
Concealed and hidden in a heifer's hide;
A four-foot veil for a two-footed bride.
Only then can I be satisfied.

[The Bull bellows]

What a serenade! Oh, sing that tune
Again, my love, and prove I'm not immune
To thinking that you hang the stars and moooooon!

[Pasiphaë steps onto the nearby ladder]

Men are former, you're the ladder! You're the rungs
Into the heavens, which are so well hung,
They switched my bell from ding to dung.

No more will human talk of love pollute
The authentic bullshit on my heart's boot.
Daedalus! How comes my heifer suit?

DAEDALUS: (working on Pasiphaë's hollow cow)
Patience, Queen; my skill obeys no clocks.
But I could put you in the grass, on blocks.

PASIPHAË:
Indeed; I have no need for brakes, just shocks.

[Pasiphaë and the Bull moo and bellow at each other]

SCENE 4: The Labyrinth

THE MINOTAUR: (squatting under the fresco of Ariadne, plugging her ears to the continued sounds of Pasiphaë & the Bull)

Clearly, I'm the only thing my parents
Did by halves. But why am I,
A walking fraction, cast into this whole?
Would my father ignore me; my mother deny me?

No! I'm as beloved as I am unique
And he who calls me outcast is a liar
Sick with envy over my immortal blood!
God is my Dam, a Demon is my sire!

O Sister, let me live with you upstairs,

Reunited with my kin, and yours.
Send me a redeemer who will take
Me to a place with fewer doors.

SCENE 5: The Church Gymnasium

CHORUS: (speaking as the Players limp off the court)
Apeneck Doctor's knee is blown,
He huddles, weeping, in a ball,
A gash on Dentist's waxen brow
Drips silent gore on floor and wall.

The Lawyers still command their legs,
But for how long? How many days
Can they withstand their fate? Will the
Monster kill them? Will the maze?

[The Chorus consults the team roster, marking losers designated for the Labyrinth]

Every year, this scene repeats.
Whoever loses, the Monster eats.
Whoever wins, they put their fears on ice.
Next year they might be sacrificed.

The losers say their last goodbyes,
The buffet dinner will console
the grieving spouses. What's the menu?

PLAYER:
Locust Noodle Casserole.

CHORUS:
Praise God from whom all blessings flow!
Every year, this scene repeats.
And will, until some genius beats
The Labyrinth. But how?

PRIAPUS:
He cheats.
I grieve to see your population dwindle.
Ariadne, may I hold that spindle? (Ariadne tosses the spindle)
I have a plan to...

MISS MILLET:
You're going to kill it?

PRIAPUS:

What else do you suggest, Miss Millet?

MISS BARLEY:

You could negotiate a truce, a parley!

PRIAPUS:

But diplomacy bores me stiff, Miss Barley.
Take some notes, my dear Miss Spelt!
I want a record of the joy you felt
When Priapus, the one-eyed Prince of Athens,
Who helped Pandora's Box to be unfathened,
Who tied Jason into Argo-knots,
Who sacks a city every time he squats,
Who sallied forth to Hades' Gate,
And with one finger laid him prostate.
Excuse me, I could go on all day,
I have a very lengthy résumé.
But it's your joy, not mine, that matters now.
Express it freely! Wanton praise endows
My limbs with fearsome strength, which I'll need
To kill the Minotaur! Say, what's this?

[Pasiphaë's tearful face is shown]

A bead of errant moisture streaks the Queen's mascara!
Is this wayward water proof of moral error?

PASIPHAË:

The Minotaur's born of my body, it's true.
I weep for the sad soul to which I gave issue!
My own flesh and blood makes me reach for a tissue!

[Ariadne offers Pasiphaë a kleenex]

PRIAPUS:

And God weeps with you. He's felt the loss
Of a beloved child. But Christ is very cross.
He disapproves of how you've turned your cheek
Into a stage for every tear that leaks
Onto it. Every droplet in its course
Shouts loudly,

PASIPHAË:

I have no remorse!

PRIAPUS:

A mother's consciousness, no one would covet;
You feel your shame but do not cease to love it.

PASIPHAË:

It's not shame I feel, it's little pricks
Of conscience.

PRIAPUS: (bowing)

O Queen, I'm at your cervix.

[Priapus turns, walks toward the Labyrinth door]

I'm not the hand, nor yet the sword,
I'm just an organ of the Lord.

[Priapus descends into the Labyrinth]