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Dramatic Publishing

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Myth Adventures: Five Greek Classics

Drama/Comedy by Eric Coble

Myth Adventures: Five Greek Classics

Drama/Comedy. By Eric Coble. Cast: 5 to 26 actors. In a whirlwind of thrills and comedy, journey into the ancient world of Greek mythology with some of the greatest characters ever to grace a stage. Do you dare to shake hands with King Midas? Or find yourself, like poor Echo, in the middle of the ultimate marriage battle between the king and queen of the gods? And why can't Narcissus pull himself away from that pool of water? Follow the world's greatest musician, Orpheus, on his quest for the one thing his music can't do—bring back his dead love, Euridice. Can his art save him in his journey to the Underworld where he'll face Charon, the undead boatsman; Cerberus, the three-headed hound; and Hades, the twisted King of the Dead himself? And when you're the son of the most famous inventor in history, how do you make a name for yourself? Daedalus only has minutes to figure it out, once he's locked in a tower with his absent-minded father, Icarus. Just how high can you fly before you fall? Then it's time to follow Theseus as he tracks down the horrifying minotaur in the labyrinth. He's determined to be a true hero, but will he survive long enough for the world to even remember his name? Taken as separate one acts, or as a full-length play, *Myth Adventures* is a fresh look at classic legends which sold out 50 performances in its premiere at the Cleveland Play House. *Area staging. Approximate running time: 90 minutes as a full-length play (15 minutes for each one act).*

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MYTH ADVENTURES

Five Greek Classics

Adapted
by
ERIC COBLE



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In addition, all producers of the play must include the following acknowledgment on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and on all advertising and promotional materials:

“*Myth Adventures* premiered at the Cleveland Play House in
October 1997, Peter Hackett, Artistic Director,
Dean R. Gladden, Managing Director.”

* * * *

Myth Adventures was first produced at The Cleveland Play House in October 1997, directed by Scott Kanoff, set and lights by Michael Roesch. The cast was as follows:

Midas, Narcissus, Daedalus Timothy Coles
Dionysus, Nysa, Ariadne. Anja Lee
Silenus, Calliope, Minos Maryjo Mace Woodburn
Orpheus, Icarus, Zeus. Matthew Vinci
Echo, Pageboy, Young Athenian Elizabeth Schwartz
Hades, Hera, Theseus Robin Hannenberg

MYTH ADVENTURES

Five Greek Classics

CHARACTERS:

Dionysus The god of parties and our narrator

KING MIDAS

Pageboys #1 & #2 Two of the unluckiest servants on Earth

King Midas Ruler of Phrygia who understands net worths

Silenus Dionysus' drinking buddy

ORPHEUS

Calliope A muse; mother to Orpheus

Orpheus The greatest musician in history

Charon The boatsman to the Underworld

Cerberus A three-headed hell-hound

Hades Ruler of the Underworld

Euridice The only woman Orpheus has ever loved

Various ghosts and souls of the dead

ECHO AND NARCISSUS

Echo The most charming nymph you ever met

Nysa The second most charming nymph you ever met

Narcissus	The most handsome man he'll ever meet
Zeus	King of the gods
Hera	Unhappy queen of the gods

DAEDALUS AND ICARUS

King Minos	The cruel ruler of Crete
Daedalus	The first great architect
Icarus	His son, a not-so-great architect

THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR

Theseus	The greatest hero Athens ever produced
Aegeus	His weak old father; King of Athens
Young Athenian	A doomed young man
King Minos	Still the cruel ruler of Crete
Ariadne	The tender daughter of Minos

PLACE:

In and around the Mediterranean Sea.

TIME:

From thousands of years ago to this very moment.

PRODUCTION NOTES: *Myth Adventures* can be performed by 5-26 actors (of any sex or ethnic group) playing all the roles (Dionysus can be played by different actors in different scenes using masks). The props and sets should be minimal, using everyday items to create spectacular theatrical effects.

Although the text was refers to standard interpretations of the costumes and props, some liberties may be taken: In the Cleveland Play House Production, for example, Orpheus carried a Walkman instead of a lyre, Hades was a spidery creature in a wheelchair, and Midas ate golden hamburgers and fries. Have fun.

* * * *

Special thanks to Scott Kanoff
for the lyrics to The Incantation.

King Midas

SETTING: *A bare stage that will represent various locales along the Mediterranean Sea.*

AT RISE: *Darkness. Dead silence. Then lights come up on DIONYSUS, the God of Revelry. He wears a traditional Greek mask, wildly painted, and flowing robes that may change color and style with each story. He is surrounded by ACTORS frozen in statuesque poses—each from one of the stories to come. DIONYSUS gazes over them all—over us all—then begins chanting (or singing).*

DIONYSUS.

WHEN THIS CIRCLE WAS MY ALTAR
I WAS WORSHIPPED BY THEM ALL
NOW THE SACRED NAME THEY WHISPERED
ECHOES THROUGH A RUINED HALL

MID THE STONES AND SUNDERED MARBLE
CAN OUR SLEEPING DEAD REVIVE?
WILL THE FIRE BE INVOKED NOW?
IS THE ECSTASY ALIVE?

(The STATUES join in the chant/song, possibly beginning to move as DIONYSUS touches each of them.)

ALL.

DEEDS OF GLORY, ACTS OF ENVY
NIGHTS OF PASSION, DAYS OF RAGE
MORTAL FEAR, CELESTIAL JUSTICE
CONSECRATE OUR ANCIENT STAGE

LET THE RITUAL BEGIN AGAIN
FIRST SOMBER AND AUSTERE
STONE IS COLD BUT HEAT TAKES HOLD
WHEN GODS DESCEND AND HOVER NEAR

(Lights change. The STATUES, now very alive, move off-stage, leaving DIONYSUS to approach an AUDIENCE MEMBER.)

DIONYSUS. I am Dionysus. The god of...fun. The god of the best parties you will ever attend. And the parties that turn ugly. Very ugly. But I do like my pleasures. You can't have too much of a good thing, can you?

(He snaps his fingers and a drunken old man, SILENUS, twists onto the stage and collapses unconscious.)

DIONYSUS *(cont'd)*. Or can you. Let us ask...King Midas.

(He exits the stage as two PAGEBOYS march on, followed by KING MIDAS absentmindedly bringing up the rear, counting gold coins. He looks remarkably like Donald Trump. The group almost trips over SILENUS' body. They pause—perplexed—a little frightened. MIDAS continues counting his money, not looking.)

PAGEBOY #1 (*whispered*). Your Majesty.

MIDAS. 28, 727...28, 728...what?

PAGEBOY #1. There's, ah, there's a body in the rose garden.

MIDAS. 28...what?

PAGEBOY #1. A body. A human body.

MIDAS. Now look what you've done!! Now we have to start from scratch! That's it. You are no longer Number One Pageboy. You're fired. (*To PAGEBOY #2.*) You. Congratulations, you're now— (*Tripping over the body.*) What's this??

PAGEBOY #2. Sir, a body, sir!

MIDAS. Well, clean it up. Suppose Princess Ino dropped by this afternoon?

PAGEBOY #2. Sir, the body appears to be alive, sir!

MIDAS. Stop shouting. Where's the other pageboy? He may have been brainless, but he was quiet. Well, don't just stand there—get this drunken oaf out of my garden.

(*SILENUS moans.*)

MIDAS (*cont'd*). Oh, never mind, I'll do it. If you want something done right— You, sir. Drunken oaf. Do you have any idea where you are?

SILENUS. Ubb...no...

MIDAS. You are in the royal rose gardens of Phrygia.

SILENUS. Oh.

MIDAS. Do you have any idea who I am?

SILENUS. ...no...

MIDAS. Typical. I am King Midas of Phrygia.

SILENUS. Oh.

MIDAS. And who are you?

SILENUS. Uff. I don't know...

MIDAS. Wonderful. An amnesiac drunkard in the garden.

Perfect start to a Monday.

SILENUS. I was...there was a...party—

MIDAS. Nothing like the party we're going to have when you move on, my inebriated friend— (*He's about to physically shove SILENUS along.*)

SILENUS. Ineb...? I was...where's Dionysus?

MIDAS (*freezes*). Did you say Dionysus?

SILENUS. I think so.

MIDAS. As in Dionysus the god? (*SILENUS nods.*) The same Dionysus who destroyed the King of Thebes? You're with him?

SILENUS. Not anymore...apparently.

PAGEBOY #1. Your Highness, if he's friends with Dionysus—

SILENUS. Friends?? Ha. More like a father. Taught him everything he knows—

PAGEBOY #2. Sir, best course of action would be to treat him kindly, sir!

MIDAS. Stop shouting.

SILENUS. Please.

MIDAS (*to SILENUS*). You do look familiar. You have no idea who you are?

SILENUS. Si...

PAGEBOY #1. Sidney?

PAGEBOY #2. Salacious?

MIDAS. Silenus?

SILENUS. That's it! By Zeus, that's me! Thank you.

MIDAS. Totally unnecessary, my friend. I'd recognize you anywhere. You're just...plumper and more...odoriferous

than I remember you. But any friend of Dionysus is a friend of mine.

(He claps his hands and the PAGEBOYS scamper around to provide all possible comforts—an umbrella, ornate drink and straw, footstool, etc.)

MIDAS (*cont'd*). Have a seat. Have a drink, food. Anything you want—are you comfortable? Can we get you anything else? Dancing eunuchs?

SILENUS. No! No, please. I'm...fine. Thank you.

MIDAS. So. Friends with Dionysus, eh?

SILENUS. Thick as thieves.

MIDAS. Where, ah, where would the god be right now, anyway?

SILENUS. Right behind you.

(MIDAS and the PAGEBOYS freeze and do a slow turn. Indeed, there stands DIONYSUS, looking like he's on his way to either a party or a gang war. MIDAS falls to his knees. The PAGEBOYS immediately do the same.)

MIDAS (*cont'd*). Dionysus. What...ahem. What a pleasure, Your...Specialness.

DIONYSUS. Get up, Midas.

PAGEBOY #2. Sir, King Midas, sir!

MIDAS. Shh!! Heh, heh. You can call me Midas. All my friends do. And we are friends, are we not, Dionysus, old chum? Right?

DIONYSUS. That depends. Silenus. How have they treated you?

SILENUS. Like a prince. Would you like a drink with a little umbrella?

(DIONYSUS walks up to MIDAS, raises him up and looks him in the face. Pause. And he grins a huge wonderful grin.)

DIONYSUS. Then we are the best of friends, King Midas!!
MIDAS. Thank the gods. Have a seat! Please! Put your feet up! Mi garden es su garden, compadre.

DIONYSUS. Don't mind if I do. My party passed through your charming gardens here last night. Wasn't till an hour ago though, that we realized we lost Silenus.

(MIDAS and PAGEBOYS laugh a little too appreciatively.)

MIDAS. Ha, ha, ha! Lost Silenus. Ha, ha, ha.

DIONYSUS. So. Midas. What can I do for you?

MIDAS. I beg your pardon?

DIONYSUS. For treating my trusted companion here so well. I owe you. What would you like?

MIDAS. Like? Aha. Me?

DIONYSUS. No, your jolly pageboys here. Of course, you! You're the king, aren't you?

MIDAS. Yes. Yes, I suppose so.

DIONYSUS. So name it. How can I repay you?

MIDAS. I can have anything?

DIONYSUS. I'm a god.

PAGEBOY #1 *(whispered)*. Your Majesty. Please be careful.

PAGEBOY #2 (*trying to whisper*). Sir, sounds like one of those god tricks, sir.

MIDAS. But I can have anything.

PAGEBOY #2. Sir, I've never heard of anyone coming out happier after one of these transactions, sir.

PAGEBOY #1. Just choose carefully, sire.

MIDAS (*to DIONYSUS*). Well. I've always loved gold.

DIONYSUS. Money? You just want more money?

MIDAS. No, not just the monetary value, but the color, the glitter, the texture under my fingers, the unmistakable clink of gold on gold as the coins slide through your hands—

DIONYSUS. And you want it all.

MIDAS. I want it now!

DIONYSUS. How much?

PAGEBOY #1. Sire—

MIDAS. A never-ending supply—

PAGEBOY #2. Sire—

MIDAS. Everything I touch! Wherever my fingers lay I'll have gold!!

DIONYSUS. King Midas, do you not have enough gold?

MIDAS. No! There's no such thing!

DIONYSUS. I urge you to reconsider—

MIDAS. You said "anything"! I could have anything—well, that's what I want—gold gold gold in everything I touch!!

(*Pause.*)

DIONYSUS. So be it.

(*Pause.*)

MIDAS. That's it? Don't you have to snap your fingers or wink or something?

(DIONYSUS and SILENUS gives each other a look...and burst out laughing.)

DIONYSUS. Silenus. Come on. We've got a party in Egypt.

(SILENUS stumbles up and off.)

MIDAS. But I got my wish, right? You granted my wish?

DIONYSUS. You'll get what you want. But you may not want what you get. *(And he and SILENUS are gone.)*

MIDAS. What did he mean by that? *(The PAGEBOYS look nervously at MIDAS.)* I made a good wish, right? I chose a good power. *(The PAGEBOYS look at each other, trembling.)* So let's test her out. *(He reaches for a small twig with leaves on the ground...hesitates...then touches it. We hear the faint "ch-ching" of a cash register in the distance. MIDAS examines the twig.)* It's...it's gold. I just created a golden leaf. Look! Look! Gold! I made gold!

PAGEBOY #1. Con...congratulations, sire.

PAGEBOY #2 *(quietly)*. Hip, hip...hooray...

MIDAS. Do you realize what this means? No more taxes! No more trade negotiations! I have all the gold I could ever want!! I'm rich! Richer!! The richest man in the world! *(He grabs a rock. Again we hear the cash register "ch-ching.")* Look! A gold nugget! Ha ha ha! Whoo-hoo!!

PAGEBOY #1. Your Majesty—

(MIDAS whips off his sandals—ka-ching!—and goes skipping across the stage to the accompanying register rings.)

MIDAS. Golden blades of grass! Golden grains of sand!
Wheee!!! *(He grabs his own face in delight.)*

PAGEBOY #2. Your Highness!!

(A terrified pause as MIDAS realizes he's touching his own skin, then he slowly removes his hands from his cheeks.)

MIDAS. Nothing! Ha! *(Poking himself.)* It's safe! No tricks! Oh, Dionysus, thank you! Thank you! *(He races around touching the floor, the walls of the stage—the cash register ringing like mad.)* Talk about your Midas touch! *(Offering his hand to an AUDIENCE MEMBER.)* King Midas, richest man in the universe. Pleased to meet you. *(Realizing he's about to touch the AUDIENCE's skin, he withdraws.)* Oop. Sorry. Almost forgot. This is the greatest day of my life!!

PAGEBOY #1. I really think Your Highness should be a little careful—

PAGEBOY #2. Yes, Your Majesty, please take care—

MIDAS. Oh, lighten up. Have some blades of grass. *(The PAGEBOYS look at each other, then at MIDAS.)* I mean it. Take it. Sell it. *(He scoops up some twigs and holds them out to the servants.)* A little bonus for keeping this our secret. Go on. Take them. There's more where they came from. *(The PAGEBOYS look at each other again... and dive to the ground, plucking golden blades of grass and grains of sand—stuffing them in pockets, bags,*

wherever they can.) That's the way, boys! Don't be shy! Gold for everyone! Or everyone I like anyway. Ha ha ha! I tell you, my lads, this day— (*unintentionally slaps PAGEBOY #1 on the back. CH-CHING. PAGEBOY #1 freezes*) —is going down in history. One simple act of kindness to a drunken oaf and I...what? (*He notices PAGEBOY #2 staring in horror at his cohort.*) Oh! (*He instinctively jumps back—toward PAGEBOY #2, who screams and scrambles out of the way.*) Wait! Stop! I command you! (*The PAGEBOY stops—cowering at the edge of the stage.*) Let's...just take a breath here. That was a mistake. I need to be more careful. I see that. But...well, this garden needed a new statue, didn't it? And he's in a...lovely pose. So let's...chalk this up to experience and move on. Pageboy?

PAGEBOY #2. Your Majesty?

MIDAS. I think some lunch is in order. All this creation has left me ravenous. Get me food. Now! (*The PAGEBOY tears off. MIDAS approaches the AUDIENCE and repeatedly almost touches them through the following.*) Look, I'm sorry, all right? I'll send gold to his family. They'll be rich. Happier without him. And he wasn't that good a pageboy, honestly—

(PAGEBOY #2 brings in a tray of food, sets it down, and backs off—way off.)

MIDAS (*cont'd*). So I have to give up shaking hands and hugging and—well, touching another human being in any way ever again. But look at all this gold! Who needs personal relationships when you can buy brilliant long-distance conversations? (*He formally sits down—*