

Act One (of one)

Note to Actors: In this script, the dialogue appears in upper- and lowercase type, and song lyrics appear in capital letters.

Outdoors, in a town square or similar open public space

A WOMAN runs across the stage. PYTHON follows shortly, intent on catching HER. APOLLO suddenly steps out from behind the proscenium and stops the PYTHON in his tracks.

APOLLO *(boldly)* What-ho, deadly Python, are you terrorizing these kindly townspeople again?

PYTHON Uh... no.

APOLLO I hear otherwise.

PYTHON *(defiantly)* Lies.

APOLLO *(skeptically)* Really? I hear that others have tried to kill you but have failed. Is that also a lie?

PYTHON Well, no, considering I'm still *alive*.

APOLLO Ah. So you are. But not for long!

Tussle ensues. APOLLO kills the PYTHON with an arrow. Townspeople run in: "What happened?" "Apollo killed him?" "Oh, thank goodness!" etc. APOLLO stands proudly.

WOMEN DID YOU SEE?

MEN DID YOU SEE?

ALL (except APOLLO, PYTHON)

DID YOU SEE WHAT APOLLO DID?

HE KILLED THE DEADLY SNAKE!

HAIL TO THEE, APOLLO!

APOLLO OH, THAT? A PIECE OF CAKE!

ALL (except APOLLO, PYTHON)

DID YOU SEE?

DID YOU SEE?

DID YOU SEE WHAT APOLLO DID?

OUR TOWN IS FIN'LLY FREE!

HAIL TO THEE, APOLLO!

WOMEN PLEASE SAY YOU'LL MARRY ME!

APOLLO LADIES, I PROTEST,

FOR IN BEAUTY I AM BLESSED.

TO MARRY ONE OF YOU

WOULD NOT BE FAIR TO ALL THE REST.

ALL (except APOLLO, PYTHON)

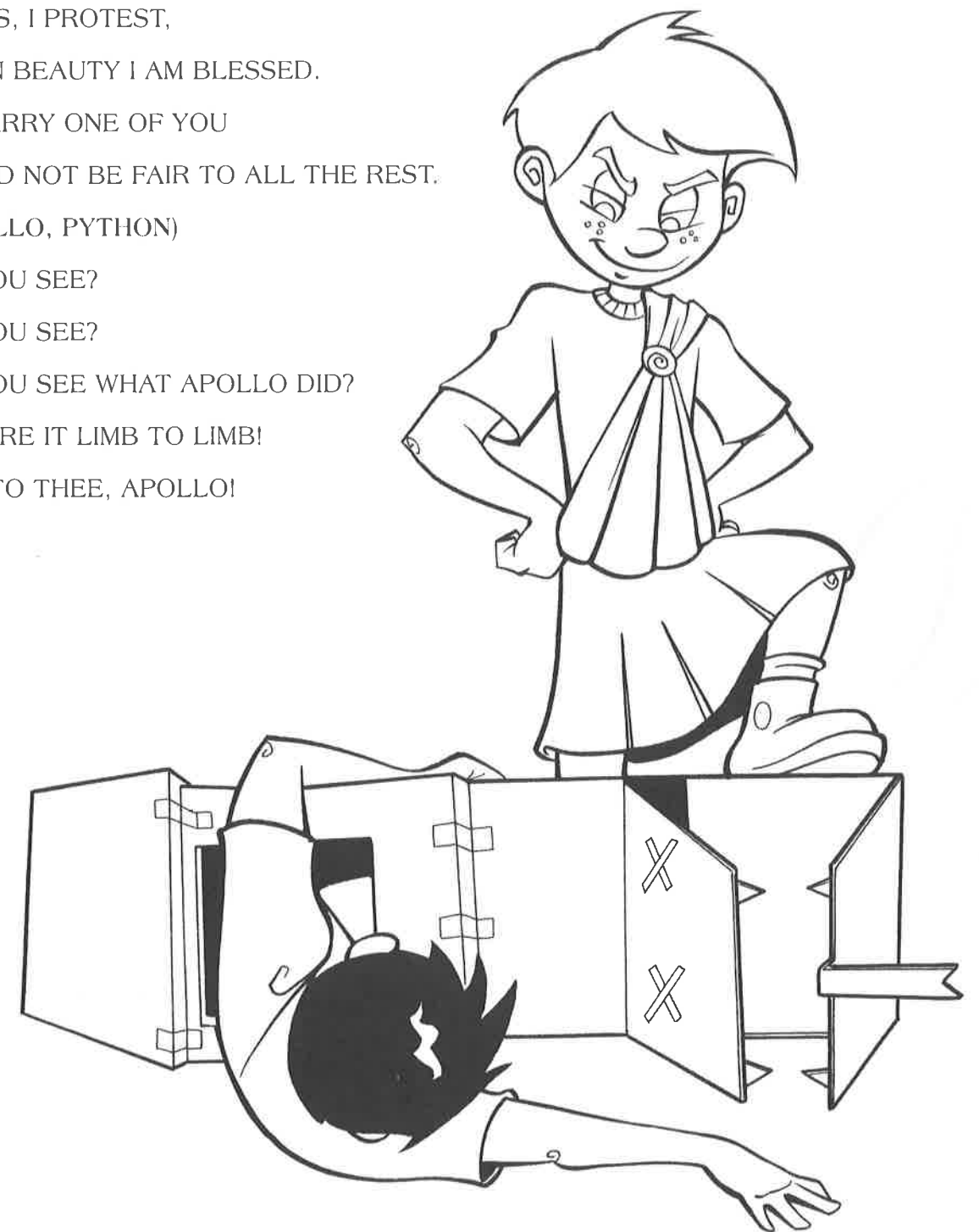
DID YOU SEE?

DID YOU SEE?

DID YOU SEE WHAT APOLLO DID?

HE TORE IT LIMB TO LIMB!

HAIL TO THEE, APOLLO!



MEN I WANT TO BE LIKE HIM.
 APOLLO MEN, I CAN'T DENY
 OR LET MODESTY BELIE.
 IN TERMS OF FIGHTING FOE,
 THERE'S NO ONE HALF AS BRAVE AS I!

ALL (except APOLLO, PYTHON)

DID YOU SEE?
 DID YOU SEE?
 DID YOU SEE WHAT APOLLO DID?
 HE KILLED THE DEADLY SNAKE!
 HAIL TO THEE, APOLLO,
 HAIL TO THEE!

CITY MAGISTRATE

As city magistrate of this town, I offer you a small token of
 our gratitude—

APOLLO (*excitedly*) Ooh, like a crown or a medal or . . .

CITY MAGISTRATE

—the key to our city!

APOLLO . . . or a useless key . . .



WOMEN I WISH THAT HE WOULD MARRY ME.

MEN I WISH I WERE AS BRAVE AS HE.

APOLLO I WISH I HAD A CROWN INSTEAD.

PYTHON I WISH I WASN'T DEAD.

(PYTHON collapses, dead.)

ALL (except APOLLO, PYTHON)

DID YOU SEE?
 DID YOU SEE?
 DID YOU SEE WHAT APOLLO DID?
 HE KILLED THE DEADLY SNAKE!
 HAIL TO THEE, APOLLO!
 HAIL TO THEE, APOLLO!
 HAIL TO THEE, APOLLO!
 HAIL TO

APOLLO That's me!

ALL HAIL TO THEE, APOLLO!

The cast freezes in a pose. Brief pause. A golden arrow flies from backstage and lands with a thud center stage. A lead (silver-grey in color) arrow follows. Everyone's eyes follow the arrows' flight. Finally EROS enters.

EROS (*in a friendly tone*) Um, hi, everyone! I was just, uh, practicing.

APOLLO (*in a superior manner*) Practice well, my child. Someday you may be half as good an archer as I.

EROS As me.

APOLLO Huh?

EROS Half as good an archer as *me*. "I" is the subject of the sentence, but the object of the preposition . . .

APOLLO (*blustering*) I totally knew that! I am the God of the Sun, you know!

MEN and WOMEN

"He totally knew that," "Yeah, he's right," "He's the sun god!"
 etc.



EROS I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend . . .

APOLLO You couldn't possibly offend . . . offend . . . (APOLLO is undecided between me and I.)

EROS Me.

APOLLO Exactly! Me is never offended by mere mortals!

EROS But I'm not mortal. I am Eros, the God of Love.

APOLLO Love? What a silly emotion. What use have I for love?

WOMEN What??

APOLLO Except for you, ladies. I love every single one of you.

WOMEN swoon.

(to EROS) Thanks for the grammar lesson. Now be off and take your baby arrows with you. (to MEN and WOMEN) He has a starter set of arrows. (to EROS) Are they color-coded for a reason, or do you just think they're pretty?

MEN and WOMEN laugh.

EROS (somewhat indignant) If I strike you with a golden arrow, you fall madly in love. If I strike you with a lead arrow, you don't.

APOLLO (laughs) With your aim, how could you possibly prove that theory?

WOMAN 1 Unless the grass now loves the dirt!

MAN 1 But now the dirt can't stand the grass!

MEN and WOMEN laugh.

EROS Go ahead, Apollo, laugh. But be careful—I don't like people who brag too much.

EROS leaves stage.

APOLLO (boldly) You forget—I'm not a person, I'm a god!

MEN, WOMEN, and APOLLO continue to taunt EROS: "What pretty arrows," "Make sure you don't hurt anyone," "Does your mommy know?" etc.

Taunting is interrupted as DAPHNE enters with RABBIT.

DAPHNE (Sweetly laughing) Oh, Rabbit. You are so very funny.

APOLLO What-ho is this?

MAN 2 Her name is Daphne, the daughter of Penaeus.

WOMAN 2 (with contempt) Some people think she's super pretty or—whatever.

WOMAN 3 But she's plain, if you look closely.

WOMEN concur. MEN disagree.

DAPHNE Oh, what did you say, little Rabbit?

RABBIT I got this wicked awesome joke, yeah? This horse, he, like, totally walks into this, like, gym, you know?

APOLLO walks to DAPHNE

APOLLO (with swaggering confidence) Why, hello. I'm Apollo. God of the Sun.



DAPHNE looks up, startled.

DAPHNE Oh, you startled me!

APOLLO I was just wondering . . .

Suddenly, EROS shoots a golden arrow at APOLLO.

APOLLO Oof! (stumbles)

EROS shoots a lead arrow at DAPHNE.

DAPHNE Oof! (stumbles)

APOLLO regains composure, sees DAPHNE.

APOLLO (enthusiastically) Let's get hitched, Daphne!

WOMAN 3 Sure, but my name's not Daphne.

MAN 3 Not you, her! (*points to DAPHNE*)

ALL are shocked, "What?" "What did he just say?"

EROS laughs.

DAPHNE (*dismissively*) Silly god, I'm far too beautiful to get married.

APOLLO No, you're not! I mean, yes, you are! I mean . . .

YOU'RE NOT TOO PRETTY TO BE WED.

WHICH IS NOT TO SAY YOU'RE NOT,

WHICH IS SAYING YOU ARE HOT,

WHICH IS SAYING I JUST THOUGHT

AS TO MARRYING, WE OUGHT,

BUT NOT BECAUSE YOU'RE PRETTY.

OKAY, YES, BECAUSE YOU'RE PRETTY,

BUT NOT BECAUSE YOU WON'T WED ME.

DAPHNE I'M FAR TOO PRETTY TO BE WED!

WHICH IS SAYING I WILL NOT,

WHICH IS SAYING I'M DISTRAUGHT,

WHICH IS SAYING I HAVE THOUGHT

AS TO MARRYING, WE'LL NOT!

YOU MAY THINK THAT I AM PRETTY,

AND YOU'RE RIGHT I'M VERY PRETTY,

BUT NOT BECAUSE I WON'T WED YOU!

APOLLO YOU'RE NOT TOO PRETTY TO BE WED.

DAPHNE WHICH IS NOT TO SAY WE OUGHT . . .

APOLLO WHICH IS SAYING I JUST THOUGHT . . .

DAPHNE WHICH IS SAYING I WILL NOT . . .

APOLLO YOU'VE BEEN SAYING THAT A LOT!

YOU'RE NOT TOO PRETTY TO BE WED.

DAPHNE WHICH IS NOT TO SAY WE'LL NOT.

APOLLO WERE YOU SAYING?

DAPHNE I WAS NOT!

YOU WERE SAYING?

APOLLO I FORGOT.
 YOU WERE SAYING THAT WE OUGHT?
 DAPHNE What?
 I WAS SAYING I REFUSED.
 APOLLO OH MY GOODNESS, I'M CONFUSED!
 PLEASE FORGIVE ME . . .
 DAPHNE YOU'RE EXCUSED.
 APOLLO I JUST THOUGHT . . .
 DAPHNE WE WILL NOT!
 APOLLO But... I'm the most powerful god in the universe,
 besides Zeus . . .
 MAN 2 —and a handful of others . . .



DAPHNE *(bored)* Congratulations, but it really doesn't change things.
 APOLLO *(confidently)* I bet your dad would say yes if I asked him for your hand. Parents can't resist me.
 DAPHNE He'll say it's my decision. And I say no.
 APOLLO Be that as it may, I'd like to ask.
 DAPHNE *(lightly)* Fine. *(screams)* DAAAAAAAAD!
APOLLO covers HIS ears. PENAEUS enters, reading a large book.
 PENAEUS *(to no one in particular)* Did you know that the Yangtze River deposits 170 million cubic meters of silt per year? *(chuckles to HIMSELF)* You'd think being God of the Rivers would make me an expert, but I am constantly surprised at what I don't know.
 DAPHNE *(impatiently)* Dad! No one's interested in dirt!
 APOLLO *Au contraire. I, sir, am fascinated by dirt, sir!*
 PENAEUS I prefer discussing water, myself . . .
 APOLLO Sir, did you know that the upper stream of Neretva has water of Class A purity?
 PENAEUS Yes, I made it that way.
Beat (brief pause)
 APOLLO *(overly eager)* I can spell Mississippi with my eyes closed.
 PENAEUS That's wonderful! I try, but I always get lost . . .
 APOLLO . . . on the second set of S's!
PENAEUS and APOLLO share a laugh.
 APOLLO Anyhoo, I'd like to marry your daughter.
 PENAEUS Wonderful news!
 APOLLO We couldn't be happier . . .
 DAPHNE *(over APOLLO)* DAAAADDDD!
APOLLO and PENAEUS cover their ears.
 APOLLO . . . excuse me *(to DAPHNE)* Daphne, could you keep it down? We're having a conversation.
 DAPHNE *(indignantly)* What?!
 APOLLO *(to DAPHNE)* Thank you. *(to PENAEUS)* Do you have a tuxedo?
 PENAEUS I'll rent one.

DAPHNE *(angrily)* No! I refuse to marry him! I refuse!

PENAEUS *(to DAPHNE)* Sweetie, I sense a bit of tension. Maybe you're a little conflicted about marriage...?

DAPHNE DAD! You're supposed to say NO!

PENAEUS *(confused)* I am?

DAPHNE Yes!

PENAEUS *(exasperated)* Oh . . . kids. You know, I can't seem to do anything right!

APOLLO Yeah, Zeus says that all the time.

MOTHER *(in crowd)* My daughter's the same way.

FATHER *(in crowd)* Every time I open my mouth, my daughter wishes I hadn't!

PENAEUS I SAY LONG,
SHE SAYS SHORT.
I SAY SHORT,
SHE SAYS LONG.
I NEVER KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT
UNTIL I'M WRONG!

FATHER IF I STOP,
THEN SHE'LL GO.

MOTHER IF I GO,
THEN SHE'LL STOP.

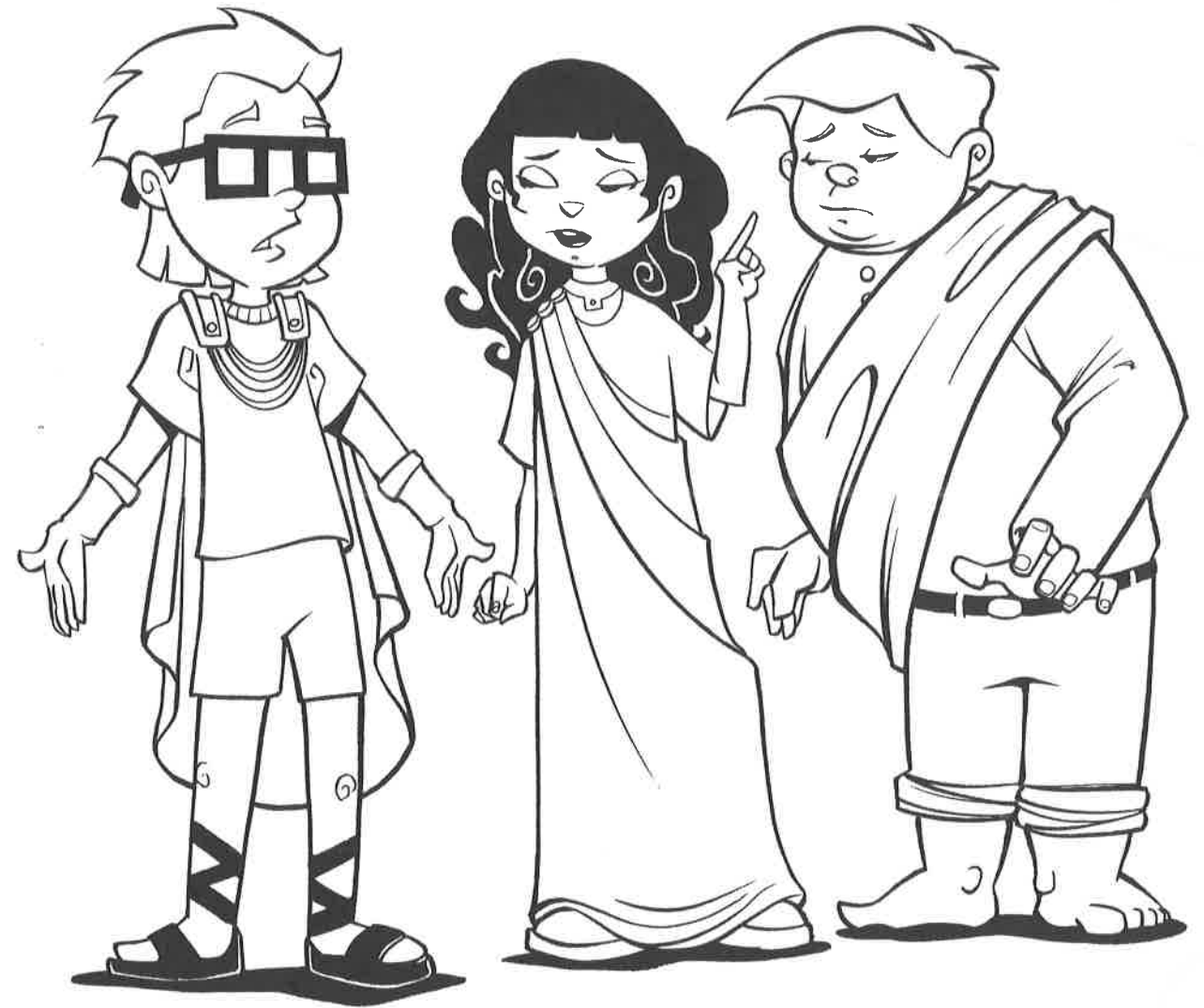
MOTHER AND FATHER
I NEVER KNOW WHAT FLIES
UNTIL I FLOP.

MOTHER MOTHERS MAY KNOW BEST,
BUT WE'RE ALWAYS SECOND-GUESSED.

FATHER AND PENAEUS
WE WERE YOUNG ONCE, TOO,
YET WE HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE!

MOTHER I'M IN DOUBT,
THEN SHE'S SURE.

FATHER AND PENAEUS
IF I'M SURE,
SHE'S IN DOUBT.



PENAEUS I NEVER KNOW WHAT'S IN
UNTIL IT'S OUT.

MOTHER I NEVER HIT THE MARK,
ALWAYS FUMBLING IN THE DARK.

FATHER AND PENAEUS
AND IF I'M RIGHT, I FIND
THAT SHE'LL QUICKLY CHANGE HER MIND.

MOTHER, FATHER, PENAEUS
I LIKE CRUST,
SHE LIKES CREAM.
I LIKE CREAM,
SHE LIKES CRUST.
I NEVER KNOW WHAT'S BEST UNTIL I BUST.

I PLAY PING,
SHE PLAYS PONG.
I PLAY PONG,
SHE PLAYS PING.
I NEVER KNOW WHAT DINGS
UNTIL I DONG.
IT'S A FIGHT THAT CAN'T BE WON.

PENAEUS HOW I WISH I HAD A SON!

MOTHER, FATHER, PENAEUS

WE NEVER KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT
UNTIL WE'RE WRONG!

DAPHNE *(exasperated)* You're embarrassing me!

PENAEUS I am?

APOLLO Sir, I don't find you embarrassing.

DAPHNE That's because he's not singing about *you*.

APOLLO Touché.

PENAEUS You know, June is a wonderful month for a wedding.

DAPHNE DAAAAAD!

APOLLO and PENAEUS cover their ears.

APOLLO Please say you'll stop yelling once we're married.

DAPHNE *We're not getting married!*

APOLLO But your dad just said . . .

Eros enters

EROS Having a little trouble there, God of the Sun?

MAN 4 You! Hey, shoot her with your baby arrows!

APOLLO Excellent idea!

DAPHNE screams in horror.

MOTHER Don't you dare shoot her!

APOLLO *(To MOTHER)* Uh, okay. *(Confidentially, to EROS)* Be very discreet . . .



DAPHNE *(To APOLLO)* You're a barbarian!

WOMEN concur. "He's horrible!" "How can he say that?" "How awful!"

APOLLO *(pointing to EROS)* Me? He's the one with the arrows!

EROS Don't drag me into this!

APOLLO *(losing patience, becoming desperate)* Just shoot the arrow, would you?!

PENAEUS You don't know much about relationships, do you, Apollo?

DAPHNE I've had enough. I'm leaving. Come on, little Rabbit.

APOLLO *(desperately)* Don't go! I'm a hero! Look — I have a key!
(APOLLO pulls out the useless key.)

DAPHNE A useless key? They couldn't even give you a crown?

APOLLO Well, it was a gift, and I didn't want to be rude . . .

DAPHNE rolls her eyes and turns to leave. APOLLO follows.

DAPHNE Good-bye.

APOLLO *Good-bye?!*

MAN 1 You're leaving the great Apollo?

APOLLO Do you even know who my father is?

PENAEUS Oh, no . . .

APOLLO grabs DAPHNE and holds on.

DAPHNE Let go of me! DAAAAAD!

RABBIT Oh my Zeus!

PENAEUS Daphne, what do you want me to do?

APOLLO We're getting married, and that's that!

DAPHNE Help me, DAD!

PENAEUS Daphne!

PENAEUS waves HIS arms, casting a spell on DAPHNE. Suddenly DAPHNE freezes and becomes a tree.

APOLLO *(dazed and confused)* What . . . what happened?

APOLLO lets go of DAPHNE THE TREE and assesses the damage.

APOLLO *(turns to PENAEUS)* You turned her into a laurel tree?

PENAEUS Oh, dear . . .



APOLLO I mean, a bird or a flower, *fine*. But who turns their daughter into a *tree*?!

PENAEUS I can't seem to do anything right . . .

EROS Chin up, Apollo. Things could be worse.

APOLLO Please go.

PYTHON *(looking at DAPHNE THE TREE)* Not a bad looking stack of sticks.

APOLLO Please don't speak. You're dead.

PYTHON collapses, dead.

RABBIT She does have tasty leaves... *(Eats leaves)*

APOLLO Please don't eat her. *(Takes leaves from RABBIT. Begins to pluck branches. During the song, weaves branches into a crown.)*

Alas, is this how it ends? Me, with nothing but a fistful of twigs? Why, Zeus, *why*?!!

I MAY BE THE GREAT APOLLO,

THOUGH MY VICTORY SEEMS HOLLOW—

MY GIRLFRIEND IS A TREE.

MEN AND WOMEN, PENAEUS, EROS, RABBIT, CITY MAGISTRATE, MOTHER, FATHER

WHO CARES IF HE'S A HERO

IF HIS SOCIAL LIFE IS ZERO.

HIS GIRLFRIEND IS A TREE.

MEN AFFECTIONATE NO MORE . . .

APOLLO SHE NEVER WAS BEFORE.

WOMEN YOU'LL NEVER HEAR HER VOICE . . .

APOLLO I DON'T WANT TO, THOUGH, BY CHOICE.

PENAEUS SHE'LL STAY WITH YOU FOREVER.

APOLLO OH, PENAEUS, HOW CLEVER!

IT'S NOT THAT I'M UNMOVED,

BUT SHE REALLY HAS IMPROVED.

MEN AND WOMEN

YOU'LL BE KING OF YOUR DOMAIN.

APOLLO NEVER ONCE WILL SHE COMPLAIN.

PENAEUS SHE'LL NEVER BE A BRIDE.

APOLLO WHAT THE HECK, AT LEAST I TRIED!

APOLLO places crown upon HIS head, admiringly.

RABBIT HAS HE NO COMPASSION?

EROS NO, HE HASN'T, NOT A SHRED!

APOLLO I LOOK SO VERY HANDSOME

WITH THIS CROWN UPON MY HEAD!

MEN AND WOMEN

ON HIS HEAD!
A CROWN FOR GODS AND HEROES
FOR WHOM EVERYONE ADORES.
HIS GIRLFRIEND IS A TREE.

APOLLO MY GIRLFRIEND IS A TREE,

SO LADIES, LADIES,

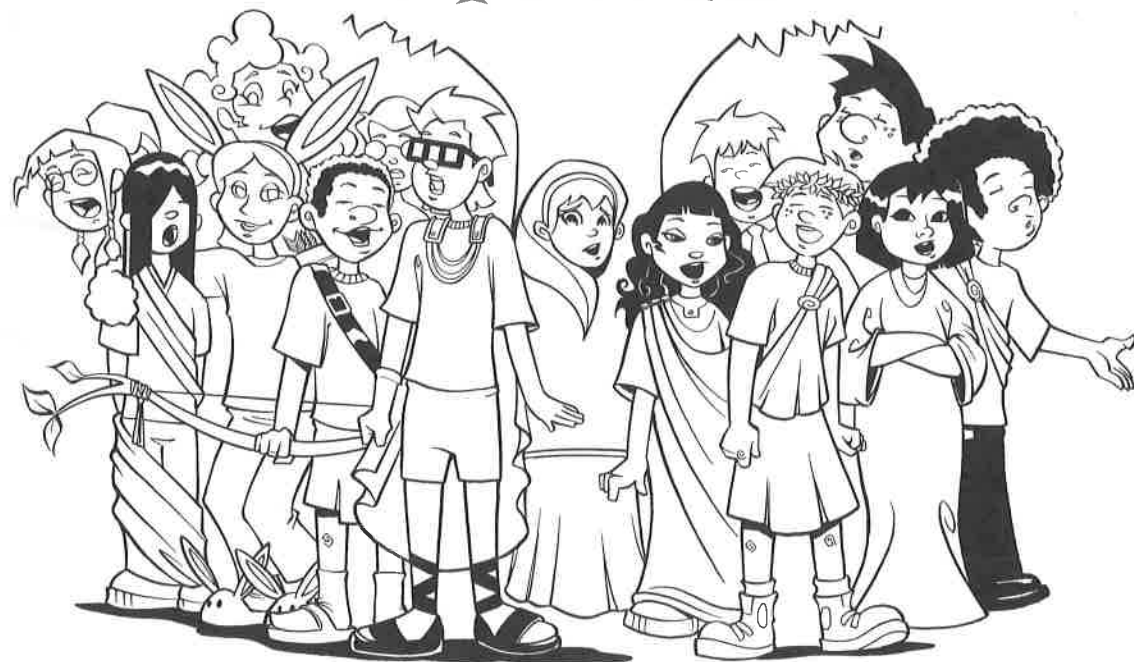
LADIES, LADIES,

I AM YOURS!

MEN He's yours!

WOMEN (Swooning) AHHHH!

The End



MUSIC

