

ORACLE

By K Stanger

Characters

Pythia - Oracle of Delphi

Danae - Princess of Argos

King Acrisius - King of Argos, Father to Danae

The Gorgons - Three Sisters: Euryale, Stheno, and Medusa

Dolius - Danae's maid

Perseus - Son of Zeus

Dictys - A fisherman from Seriphos

King Polydectes - King of Seriphos

Andromeda - Princess of Aethiopia

Playwright's Note

The songs of the Gorgons should be sung and ideally accompanied by instruments in a folk rock style. This style is inspired by R.E.M.'s Automatic for the People. Music can be done a cappella, but the addition of at least drums and electric guitar is ideal. Instrumental interludes in the same style may also be used to carry us in and out of the world of fog.



PART I - ARGOS

We begin in the fog of a dark mountain forest. The audience should feel enveloped by the setting. If staged in a proscenium style, the world of the play should spill out as if we are seated in a thrust.

Out of the fog, PYTHIA emerges. She spends a long time looking at us, examining us. She moves like a snake, cat, or crow. She looks right into our eyes—without fear or curiosity—it is almost as if she has known each of us all of our lives. To us she speaks.

PYTHIA

Do you know where you are?
High up in the mountains—maybe you have come to seek me in my eternal rot.
Or maybe you have been called here.
Perhaps you already know me.
Or else you are a spirit that has slept long inside my halls...
...do you have something for me?
In any case if you are here it is not by mistake.
All who seek are changed,
All called are rearranged,
And if you dwell here you well know our muddy secrets and dreadful worms we feast upon.

You are here.
And so a particular kind of magic slithers within you.
One that is thirsty,
Or tempered,
Or well-read.
But here there is no place to hide,
Here there is no eye that cannot see you.

For a while we shall look at one another,
And breathe,
For a time we may forget we are not one.
And if you dare to open—
You will know the truth.

For here is where all things come to rest, to question, to dissolve.

As all things go.

PYTHIA disappears again into the fog, as she fades, palace walls are revealed. KING ACRISIUS, of middle age, sits gazing out a window at his fruitful kingdom, Argos. A young DANAЕ skips in, carrying something tightly in her fist.

DANAЕ

Father!

ACRISIUS

My heart, what have you found today?

DANAЕ hurls herself into The King's arms. There is laughter as he takes hold of her and lifts her up. The King settles his daughter next to him, where she carefully unwraps a handkerchief and reveals a small black stone. DANAЕ hands the stone to her father who examines it and holds it up to the light. As he does this, the stone flashes from black to green and back again.

ACRISIUS

Ah, a wishing stone.

DANAЕ

A wishing stone?

ACRISIUS

Yes, is that not why you brought it to me?

DANAЕ

I just thought that it was pretty.

ACRISIUS

It is, but it also holds magic for us.

DANAЕ

But it is just a rock!

ACRISIUS

It is a rock.

Formed from lava that erupted deep within the center of our mother.

DANAE

Mother?

My mother?

ACRISIUS

No dear, our mother. Our kingdom of Argos.

DANAE

So the rock is a tiny kingdom?

ACRISIUS

In a way—

DANAE

Did my mother ever give me a rock?

ACRISIUS

No, but she did bring you into this world.

DANAE

So I am a rock.

A kingdom!

The King laughs

ACRISIUS

Yes my love, in particular you are like this one.

DANAE

Why?

ACRISIUS

Because this stone grants wishes.

DANAE

How do I make a wish?

ACRISIUS

Well first you must listen to the rock, here, hold it to your ear.

DANAE and the king lift the rock to their ears listening together.

DANAE

It says nothing.

ACRISIUS

We are listening for the wish, and it might be more like a feeling than something in your ear, try again.

DANAE holds the stone close to her ear, she closes her eyes, scrunches her nose, and takes a deep breath. After a moment the stones magic pours into DANAE, she has experienced what her father described. She shares an excited look with the King.

DANAE

Now what?

ACRISIUS

Now you whisper your wish as quietly as you can to the stone.

DANAE holds the stone in her little hands close to her heart, then she brings it to her lips and whispers so inaudibly we might not even know that she has spoken.

ACRISIUS

Hold it with you until your wish comes true.

DANAE grasps the stone tightly and with excitement, she leans on her father's shoulder. They sit in a comfortable silence for a moment.

DANAE

Mother braided my hair today.

ACRISIUS

She did?

DANAE

Yes—and I didn't even ask her to!

ACRISIUS

I'm glad to hear.

DANAE

When will you go to see her?

ACRISIUS

When she can join me at my table and in my courtroom.

DANAE

I should have given her my wish.

ACRISIUS

I had assumed you would, what did you wish for then?

DANAE

I wished for our wishes.

ACRISIUS

Me and you?

DANAE

Yes.

ACRISIUS

And what are our wishes?

DANAE

For myself a brother,
And for you a son.

Acrisius takes a moment to look out again at Argos, the kingdom his father had given him. With its orchards of fertile trees, the expansive plains, and there off in the distance—the misty mountains lining its border.

ACRISIUS

That is a very good wish, my heart.

DANAE

Thank you, father.

ACRISIUS

Hold tight to that stone.

DANAE

No, you keep it, and the wish will be true.

Danae hands her father the stone who holds her hand tightly in his, the stone between them.

We return again to the world of fog.

The Gorgon sisters enter, they are statue-like with jagged wings and snakes for hair, which slither about as they do. The sisters sing to us.

STHENO

Stones can shake strong palace walls asunder.
little stones can stick in your shoe like glue.
And poke your toes,
like dagger.

EURYALE

Round stones roll up villages and seas,
And spew out symphonies or sirens,
Rounding round corners,
or lakes.

MEDUSA

Stones don't feel like I do.
Stones don't have skin like me.
Stone hearts don't beat, or break.

STHENO, EURYALE, and MEDUSA

Heads are made of butter,
But hearts are made of stone.
The fleshy kind that peel like onion,
Or the bubble-filled kind that crumble unknown.

EURYALE

Stone.

MEDUSA

Stone.

STHENO

Stone.

STHENO, EURYALE, MEDUSA

Be careful, or not, to watch what you've got,
before it all turns to stone.

MEDUSA

You'll journey now, moons ahead, where girls turn into women.
Where kings and fools live hand in hand—their daughters rarely
with them.

*The Gorgon sisters disappear and we move again out of the fog,
just outside the palace walls.*

*DANAE, now a grown woman, lays in a field of goats, her arms
hanging up in the air, her fingers tracing the outlines of
clouds.*

ACRISIUS approaches her silently, about to surprise her.

DANAE

You know I can hear you.

ACRISIUS

You're too bright for me now..
And yet all your days are spent with goats.

DANAE

They are the only creatures here that can come close to my intelligence.

DANAE and ACRISIUS laugh, DANAE jumps up and offers her father her picnic jug.

ACRISIUS

No, you know I'm not fond of wine.

DANAE

But I made this one myself!

ACRISIUS

A King cannot live in constant headache—and you should not either. Spending the day with goats, making wine—this will not make you a pleasant wife.

DANAE

It makes me a pleasant daughter.

ACRISIUS

Yes, my heart.

The king sighs.

DANAE

Are you traveling again?

ACRISIUS

Yes, our ships leave this afternoon.

DANAE

Will you be gone long?

ACRISIUS

Not this time.

DANAE

(Jokingly)

So my future husband lives close?

ACRISIUS

You know I am looking for a very particular kind of man.

DANAE

Yes, a man who desires a woman's feet to smell of grapes.

ACRISIUS

You deserve the very best.

DANAE

Where are you going? Most of your trips are weeks at least. What kingdom is so close?

ACRISIUS does not respond.

DANAE

Can I come with you?

ACRISIUS

You and I both know you do not fare well at sea.

DANAE

But I would fare well to know this mysterious prince that will relish in bringing your daughter a son.

ACRISIUS

That is not—

I am seeking the best for you.

DANAE

What if the best for me is here, in my fields with my goats.
With my friend.

ACRISIUS

Your friend? Or your maid?

DANAE

My friend.

I just wonder—

if—

ACRISIUS

Yes?

DANAE

I wonder if I had a brother...would you care at all if I married?

ACRISIUS

I would.

And I would care that he was a good man, from a good kingdom
that would bring you blessings.

And love.

I would like you to be loved.

DANAE

I did not know that.

ACRISIUS

Are you at peace then, my heart? Will you be alright the days I
am gone?

DANAE

Yes.

DANAE and ACRISIUS embrace.

The sun begins to settle lower in the sky.

DANAE

You're leaving soon then?

ACRISIUS

Yes.

DANAE

Race you to the port!

*DANAE runs off with The Old King leaping behind her, laughing as
they race towards the ships.*

*The forest of fog returns, and PYTHIA with it.
She speaks to us.*

PYTHIA

She does not know the winds her father takes to reach me.
How he crawls to me to untangle the web he weaves himself.
Poor King—how he will change,
As sickness permeates the palace.

Who will save your heart now?
As wicked rain falls?

Here he comes.

ACRISIUS approaches from the fog.

PYTHIA

Why are you here old man?

ACRISIUS

Many nights and mornings I have been drawn here to your earthly
opening. But I am sure you know this well.

PYTHIA

I know what you crave—

Itty...
bitty...
babyyy.

ACRISIUS

Why do you mock me witch?

PYTHIA

Your claws are scratching for knowledge—but the knowing will be
your end.

ACRISIUS

(Forcefully)
Will I have an heir?

PYTHIA

To know...you know what you must do.

PYTHIA beckons ACRISIUS to join her deeper in the fog.

ACRISIUS

This will end me?

PYTHIA

There are no two ways about it.

ACRISIUS

My life.

My line.

PYTHIA circles the King, whispering in his ear.

PYTHIA

Rats.

Snakes.

Porridge.

Pom—

E—

Gran—

Ite

Seeeeedssssss.

ACRISIUS

(Swiping PYTHIA away)

Demon Woman!

PYTHIA

Make your choice King of Argos—to know, or to keep your heart?

ACRISIUS

My heart?

PYTHIA

Yes fool! If you come with me now all your life hereafter you will fear each waking moment, you will never be this man again.

ACRISIUS

Tonight I will not die?

PYTHIA

You may live years, but half alive.

ACRISIUS

Madness?

PYTHIA

Beyond.

ACRISIUS

(Under his breath)

Torture, treason. Exile?!

PYTHIA

CHOOSE.

Old.

Man.

PYTHIA offers ACRISIUS her hand. The King hesitates and reaches out shakily. He looks into the mist, then back towards his kingdom. Sharply he takes PYTHIA's hand. Both are engulfed by fog.

The palace interior is again illuminated, DANAЕ sits with her maid DOLIUS, in DANAЕ's bed chamber.

DANAЕ

Do you think that I am good?

DOLIUS

(Jokingly)

I'm not sure I know you well enough to know yet.

The girls laugh, DANAЕ swipes her handkerchief at DOLIUS.

DANAE

Dolius! Truly I am asking.

DOLIUS

Why? Are you worried that you are not good?

DANAE

I'm unsure. I've developed a belief that all people are born with a truth in their heart—some good and some evil. So if you are born evil you just have to work harder to be good. But if you were born good then goodness flows from you.

DOLIUS

And you want to be good?

DANAE

Yes.

DOLIUS

So is it hard for you to be good?

DANAE

I don't know. Sometimes it is hard, like giving the best portion of breakfast to father, or coming home on time for dinner. But other times it is easy, like sneaking figs back for us to share at midnight.

DOLIUS

So what about me then, am I good?

DANAE

(In a Mocking High-lady voice)

You know I am taught to believe that you are less of a person than I am. Don't forget you were my birthday gift sweet Dolius. In which case your only morality is to serve.

DOLIUS

Yes, and I know you to believe that completely.

DANAE pokes at DOLIUS's side and the girls laugh again.

DANAE

You are goodness Doliuss—truly.

DOLIUS

Who else do you believe was born good then?

DANAE

Mother was.

She worked her life to make father's wish come true.

DOLIUS

Poisoning yourself to give a son to a king should not be something you consider good.

DANAE

She was good! And a good mother to me.

To be a mother at all is goodness.

DOLIUS

Being a mother seems like wound after wound.

DANAE

Well I *must* be a mother.

Although I don't know anything of men.

DOLIUS

I only know the stable boys—and to stay away from them.

DANAE

Is it painful?

DOLIUS

Yes.

DANAE looks as if she might sob.

DANAE

Will you come with me?

DOLIUS

Other palaces may have 2 or even 3 women to serve you.

DANAE

I don't want them.
I want to bring you, Doliuss.
I never want to stop spending my days with you eating figs in
the grass and riding our horses up into the mountains.
Having you to whisper with when the day is done.

DOLIUS

You must ask your father.

I am sure we would return to Argos anyway.
I hear your father is seeking out second born princes.

DANAE

I'll be with father all his life.

DOLIUS

What about him, the King?
Do you think he was born good?

DANAE

I think father has to work hard to be good.
Maybe I am like that too.

DOLIUS is quiet.
DOLIUS takes DANAE's hand and gives her palm a kiss.
They fade away to fog.

ACRISIUS and PYTHIA move slowly, ACRISIUS is shaken.

ACRISIUS

...I must return to port.

PYTHIA

Ah, but such a gift requires payment.

ACRISIUS

That was no gift.

PYTHIA

Even so.

ACRISIUS

I have nothing for you witch, I will be going.

At this moment a pig rushes past, wearing a tunic with the symbol of Argos. The pig approaches ACRISIUS and nuzzles his leg, before spotting a bug and chasing it away into the fog.

PYTHIA

How will you return? With no men to pull your ship?

ACRISIUS

(Putting it together)

That was Lynceus! My men...what have you done?

PYTHIA

All will be no matter if I receive payment.

ACRISIUS removes coins from his pockets.

ACRISIUS

I have gold, here is gold.

PYTHIA

What good is gold, old man?

ACRISIUS

What do you want?

You have already taken my life!

PYTHIA

Something more precious to you than gold.

ACRISIUS is lost, he thinks for a moment, and then from a carefully kept pouch he removes the wishing stone DANAE had given him.

He holds out the glowing stone to PYTHIA, who takes it and inspects it.

PYTHIA

So you will keep her?

ACRISIUS

Of course I will, she is my daughter.

PYTHIA

You will contain her?

ACRISIUS

I will do what I must.

PYTHIA

Be gone then.

PYTHIA waves her arm through the air, magic coming with it. The fog moves now like a tornado, blowing leaves and branches of the forest out. ACRISIUS fights the wind to escape, while PYTHIA vanishes into the fog.

The three Gorgon sisters return, giggling as they herd more palace dressed pigs out of the forest.

*MEDUSA stops, hearing a sound in the wind.
She sings.*

MEDUSA

She'll wait like I did for the rain, though she doesn't know
it's coming.

Storms are fits of raging men,
their tantrums are the drumming.

STHENO

Still there are pools within a woman
that lay silent,
that flow still.

EURYALE

And men who try to reach them
lose their fingers,
for the thrill.

MEDUSA

Sorrow isn't careful, and rarely is it kind,
And joy that's born from wickedness,
leaves a bitter taste behind.

STHENO and EURYALE

Good bread is always salty.
Good fish are hard to find.
You'll ache for all the trouble,
When the cheese all turns to rind.

The sisters disappear.

*The fog bleeds again into the chamber of DANAE where she sits
with DOLIUS.*

DANAE

What do you think he will look like?

DOLIUS

I don't know, some princes are ugly.

DANAE

Dolius!

DOLIUS

It doesn't matter, even the pretty ones smell foul, or chew too
loudly, or treat the horses cruelly.

DANAE

I take it back you are not good.

DOLIUS

Danae would you rather that I lie?

DANAE

No.

DOLIUS

Is a husband something you want?

DANAE

Well I must have a husband.

DOLIUS

You must?

Because you want to?

Or because *he* wants you to?

DANAE

Because I must, Dolius!

DOLIUS

But you do not...
want to.

*DOLIUS teases DANAE and traces her finger down the length of
DANAE's arm.*

DOLIUS

In fact you do not even wish to.
I don't think you have ever, or will ever, desire a husband.
And if you did—

*DANAE stops DOLIUS's taunt by kissing her hard on the lips.
DOLIUS pulls away, surprised but not shocked.
They look at each other a few feet away, as if they could touch
all the newness between them.*

They smile.

They laugh.

Slowly they move towards each other and tentatively kiss again.

Lights fade.

Lights come up on the palace halls, DANAË runs through them. Stopping guards along the way.

DANAË

Father!
Father!?

DANAË stops a palace guard.

DANAË

Is my father back? I heard ships made port!

The guard ignores DANAË and moves past her quickly. This is unusual and she calls after him.

DANAË

I need to speak with him!

DANAË continues to run through the halls, searching for The King.

The palace priest, Chryses, moves down the hall towards DANAË with dark hooded soldiers behind him. DANAË rushes towards the priest still yelling.

DANAË

Chryses! I need to speak to my father!
I need to tell him—

As DANAË reaches the priest, the soldiers march in front of him and gather DANAË up. They begin to drag her towards stairs that lead below the palace.

DANAË

Chryses? CHRYSSES! Tell them to stop! Where is father? Let me GO!
CHRYSSES!!

The priest remains silent and gives the soldiers a nod to take DANAË down the staircase. DANAË continues to scream and demand to be freed. As they are about to descend the staircase ACRISIUS enters. DANAË looks relieved.

DANAE

FATHER! I'm here, father!

The King looks on, silent.

He nods to the priest and they turn to go.

DANAE shrieks in defeat.

DANAE

FATHER!!

FATHER!

Great and terrible sounds of thunder engulf the stage into darkness.

With a match, a candle is illuminated.

DANAE sits in a small room, not bigger than a closet with a mat to lay on. The walls, floor, and ceiling of which are covered in bronze that flickers and glows with the candle light.

DOLIUS blows out the match, and sits on the floor next to DANAE.

DOLIUS wraps her arms around DANAE and holds her like this for a moment.

DANAE

I'm glad you're here.

DOLIUS

Yes.

DANAE

What has happened?

DOLIUS

I will tell you what I know, but we must speak quietly.

DANAE

Why?

DOLIUS

I will get to that.

DANAE settles in, DOLIUS tries to find the right words.

DOLIUS

When your father returned from his trip, he ordered that you be brought to this chamber, which is to remain locked, night and day.

DANAE is about to scream or cry but DOLIUS covers her mouth gently.

DOLIUS

You are to remain here.
For your safety.

DANAE

Safety?

DOLIUS

As I understand it.

DANAE

There are no windows!
There is no light or—
What will I—?

DOLIUS

I know.

DANAE

I need to speak with him.

DOLIUS

He will not speak with you.

DANAE

Get me out!
Help me!

DOLIUS

If I leave this chamber with you, there is a guard waiting to kill me right outside.
And you will be returned here, where you will spend your days alone.

DANAE

Only you can come in?

DOLIUS

I am at your service.

DANAE

Dolius, please!
There must be—

DOLIUS

There is not.

DANAE

Then, why?
I must know why.

DOLIUS

What I know is that only women are to enter your chamber, men cannot even walk this corridor.

DANAE

That is strange.

DOLIUS

Yes, and...

DANAE

And?

DOLIUS

Above us is his chamber. The King's.
I think if you are quiet enough you can hear his footsteps.

The girls press their ears to the ceiling of the room as the upper stage is illuminated. ACRISIUS stands pacing, clutching a goblet of wine.

DANAE realizes that this is why they must be quiet, she looks at DOLIUS, pleading.

DOLIUS

I will be here.
We will spend our days together.

DANAE

You will come everyday?

DOLIUS

Always.

They share a kiss.

DANAE

I now believe differently about goodness.

DOLIUS

You do?

DANAE

Yes.
I believe you are the only goodness.

DOLIUS presses her forehead into DANAE's. They sit for a moment in silence.

DOLIUS

I must go, but I'll be back for breakfast.

DANAE

Bring figs!

DOLIUS nods, and exits the small door at the side of the chamber. DANAË stands again and looks up at the ceiling.

DANAË presses her ear to the top of the room and listens for footsteps.

*Overhead The King has stopped his pacing.
He too has leaned with his ear to the floor.
Suddenly DANAË's eyes open wide.*

DANAË

I can hear you breathing.

The King doesn't move but makes a face of surprise.

DANAË

Can you hear me?
I'm breathing too.
I'm still alive down here!

*DANAË now breaks into a small sob.
ACRISIUS pulls his head away from the floor.*

DANAË

Where are you father?
I need you.

The King quietly gets up and moves to a table to pour himself more wine. He sinks into his throne, silent tears pour from his eyes. He speaks quietly enough that DANAË cannot hear.

ACRISIUS

I am here, my heart.
I am here.

Lights fade on ACRISIUS's chamber, DANAË remains illuminated, she tosses and turns on her mat. She lays on the cool bronze floor. Restless, DANAË scratches at the floor with her nails.

After this fitfulness, she notices her clawed marks remained on the floor. An idea grows in her mind. Sitting up, she removes a

pin from her hair and begins to sketch with it on the wall of the room.

Lights fade out.

Lights fade up, a fourth of the walls of DANAË's room are now covered with her artwork. Drawings of goats, horses, maps of Argos, and portraits of DOLIUS are scattered across the walls. DANAË lays on her mat, tossing a ball up at the ceiling and catching it again.

DOLIUS enters, concealing something under her shawl.

DOLIUS

Quickly! Come here!

DANAË

Dolius—

From out of DOLIUS's shawl spills a small black puppy, who runs to DANAË and sniffs quietly at her feet.

DANAË is elated.

DANAË

Dolius!
Oh he is perfect.

DOLIUS

I knew you would like him.

DANAË

How did you—?

DOLIUS

Old Sal had her litter last week. He's the quietest of the bunch.

DANAË

You are a marvel.

DANAE hugs and kisses DOLIUS.

DOLIUS

I thought you could use more company than just me.

DANAE

Thank you.

DOLIUS

What's his name then?

DANAE

I think I will call him Argos.

DOLIUS

Argos the dog of Argos.
Perfect.

DANAE

But he must not stay trapped here like me.

DOLIUS

Well they won't keep him in the fields, didn't you notice?

DANAE looks closer at Argos, and realizes he is missing one of his back legs.

DANAE

Well if I am doing him a service...

DOLIUS

He cannot herd.
You'll have to live goat-less together.

DANAE

It is so hard.

DANAE and DOLIUS laugh.

DOLIUS

He can be trained too, something for you to do besides scratch at your walls like a mad-person.

DANAE

Would you do any better?

DOLIUS

I'm sorry.

DANAE

Any news?

DOLIUS

No one sees him.

He stays in his chamber, the priest takes him wine.

DANAE

Wine?

DOLIUS

You probably know more than most.

DOLIUS gestures up at the ceiling.

DANAE

He says nothing.

I sometimes think I hear him sobbing,

Then I believe it is in my head.

DOLIUS

Maybe he no longer wants you to be married.

DANAE

Well that is clear.

DOLIUS

That could be good—

DANAE

If I was not shut inside a box!

DOLIUS

I know. I must go, for wash-up.

DANAE

I'm sorry I kept you—I—

DOLIUS

Do not worry.

DOLIUS kisses DANAE gently.

DANAE

Thank you, he is the best gift.

DOLIUS

Goodnight.

DOLIUS exits and DANAE lays on her mat, Argos snuggles up beside her. Above them the king is illuminated, asleep with a jug of wine in his hand.

*DANAE falls to sleep. Thunder sounds.
Argos whimpers as the thunder grows louder, DANAE wakes.*

DANAE

It's alright Argos.

*Argos cuddles closer to DANAE, they are both jolted by another loud bolt of thunder.
From the ceiling of the bronze room a small drip of golden rain falls, DANAE looks at the glowing drop on the floor. She touches it. She burns her hand.*

DANAE

Ow!
...fire is falling from the sky.

*Another bolt of thunder.
DANAE shivers scared, Argos continues to whimper and runs to a corner of the small room.
More drops fall, they seem to stick to DANAE who screams out as they burn.*

DANAE

FATHER!

*The King shudders awake. He grips his throne.
More Thunder.*

DANAE

FATHER!

I AM BURNING!

ACRISIUS

(Quietly and drunkenly)
A clever attempt at escape.

*The drops continue to fall more heavily until DANAE is covered
in fire.
Thunder and Lighting shudder the bronze room.*

DANAE

I AM BURNING!

FATHER HELP ME!

IT IS INSIDE ME NOW!

*ACRISIUS pours his wine straight from the jug to his lips. The
wine overflows his mouth and pours down his body. DANAE still
screams, the poison rain engulfing her.*

DANAE

FATHER!

*DANAE collapses, a final bolt of thunder.
ACRISIUS collapses, wine-blind to the floor.
Suddenly the rain is gone. DANAE lies shuddering on the floor.
Argos stumbles over to DANAE and nestles himself in the nape of
her neck.*

*At last, DOLIUS enters.
DANAE reaches for DOLIUS, weeping. DOLIUS holds her.*

They fade away to fog.

Back in the forest the Gorgon sisters return with their song.

MEDUSA

What makes a girl a woman?
to be touched?
to be loved?

STHENO

What makes a woman good?
Send her a child,
from above.

EURYALE

What makes a child grow?

MEDUSA

Avarice?

STHENO

Sin?

MEDUSA, STHENO and EURYALE

Did we lock her up? Or did we let him in?

STHENO and EURYALE

What makes a belly full?
Often chicken,
often pie.

MEDUSA

But a baby does it most,
and exits in an aching—
goodbye.

The world of fog fades as we return to DANAË's bronze box. The walls are now covered with drawings. DANAË sits with her back to the audience, training Argos.

DANAE

Stand!

Argos stands up on his one hind leg. DANAЕ offers him a treat.

DANAE

Jump!

Still standing on his back leg, Argos does a jump in the air. DANAЕ laughs and offers him another treat.

DANAE

Dance!

Argos remains hopping but moves in a little spin around himself. DANAЕ laughs and gives him a pet. DOLIUS enters, carrying a basket. As DANAЕ turns to face DOLIUS, her profile is revealed to the audience—specifically DANAЕ's very large, and very pregnant belly.

DANAE

Oh good! So you found them?

DOLIUS

Yes, I've got everything—and this!

DOLIUS hands DANAЕ a small but thick stick of wood.

DANAE

What is this for?

DOLIUS

So that you don't scream.

DANAE

What?

DOLIUS

You bite it—see?

DOLIUS demonstrates by placing the stick length-wise in her mouth and biting down on it.

DANAE

Anything for him.

She motions to her belly.

DOLIUS

You seem very sure about *him* being a him.

DANAE

I just know.

DOLIUS

Here is the tea, don't drink it until midnight. It should start to work tomorrow morning.
I've got to be here.

DANAE

I know.

DOLIUS

Then I'll take him straight away to the stables where I am sure Elena is ready to rip all of that stuffing out of her dress.

DANAE

Bless her.

DOLIUS

This was The King's dream for so long...
You should not be giving birth to the heir in a broom closet.

DANAE

He will not live as the heir.

DOLIUS

I know, I know. But he will be.

DANAE

Dolius.

DOLIUS

I'm sorry.

DANAE

Thank you.
For all you've done.

DOLIUS

Well,
I love you.

DANAE

Well I love you too.

And it is wonderful to know love.
In this terrible box.

DOLIUS

You are such a loon.

They laugh.

DOLIUS

Now rest, I'll be back for the morning, and don't forget to take
the tea right at—

DANAE

At midnight.
I know.

*DANAE lays down on her mat as DOLIUS exits, looking up at the
ceiling.*

*DANAE wonders about her father for the first time in a long
time. She stands, she places her ear to the ceiling but can hear
nothing.*

*She holds her hand up to touch the top of the room.
She sighs.*

*Suddenly a look flashes across DANAE's face.
Pain, and then terror.*

DANAE

No.

Another flash of pain.

DANAE

Dolius!

Oh no.

DANAE reaches to feel her dilation. She has progressed at an inhuman rate.

DANAE

Oh-Dolius!

Oh no.

*DANAE grabs the stick and places it in her mouth. The lights fade out on the bronze room, and up on The King's chamber.**ACRISIUS's chamber is scattered with wine jugs. He paces the floor, wine in one hand, rubbing the sides of his temples with the other.*

ACRISIUS

(Mumbled, and chant-like)

My life.

My line.

My life.

My line.

My life.

My--

*From below the loud squeal of a newborn baby is heard. ACRISIUS jumps, and runs out of the chamber, wine goblet crashing to the floor.**All fades dark and to the sound of waves.**A small flicker of light, DANAE is illuminated, clutching baby PERSEUS. They are held in a coffin-like box, upright in the middle of the dark stage. The sounds of waves grow louder and*

cause the light to flicker, until a large wave knocks the light out.

Darkness.

PART II - SERIPHOS

DANAE sits wrapped in a blanket in the corner of a small shack, with PERSEUS swaddled next to her. The fisherman, DICTYS, carries a cup of warm broth over to DANAE. He sits with her next to the fire.

DANAE

Seriphos?

DICTYS

Yes.

DANAE

I have never heard of it.

DICTYS

We are small.

DANAE

Do you have a King?

DICTYS

Polydectes, although he is as kingly as a child.

DANAE

The King of an island must be.

DICTYS begins working on tying a fishing fly. DANAE studies him for a moment.

DANAE

Did your wife pass?

DICTYS

I have never had a wife.

DANAE

I am sorry. Something about the way you work—

DICTYS

Most men my age have been married.

DANAE looks around the small space, nervously.

DANAE

We will not be here long, I should return home.

DICTYS

Return?

DANAE

Yes, I must try to—

DICTYS

Forgive me if I overstep, but I do not think you should return to where they put you and your newborn son in a coffin to drown at sea.

DANAE

I don't—

DANAE begins to sob.

DANAE

I'm sorry I am so confused.

DICTYS

I cannot imagine.

DICTYS places a gentle hand on DANAE's shoulder.

DICTYS

You are not overstaying a welcome.

DANAE

Thank you.

If there is a way that I can be useful to you—

DICTYS

Company is useful.

DANAE

Well we can both be that.

DANAE looks down at PERSEUS as he gently snores.

DICTYS

He is your only child?

DANAE

Yes.

DICTYS

A mother is a brave thing to be.

DANAE

I agree.

I still feel that I am just a girl.

DICTYS

You are.

DANAE

I'm not sure I know how to be a mother.

DICTYS

No mother knows how to be a mother.

And luckily I do not either...

...you will not be alone.

DANAE

Thank you.

DICTYS

Tomorrow I'll take you to the shores, Seriphos will be a fine place for the boy to grow.

DANAE scoops PERSEUS up into her arms.

DANAE

He is the only thing that has ever been mine.
The only thing safe for me to love.

DICTYS

To love at all is dangerous.

DANAE, DICTYS, and PERSEUS fade away to fog.

PYTHIA returns. She looks out at us, moves in her animal way toward us, reaching closer than she has before.

PYTHIA

Forgotten me?
And you forget I am the story.
The King fell only to me.
What men must know that women do not, is nothing and nothing between.
They'll chop off our heads to know what we know,
Steady pools drip from our neck.
And turning,
and turning,
and turning,
they'll go.
No boats to bring them back.

Next is time and next is ocean.
Sea and fish of many scales.
Next is mother, son, and boatman,
Next is proper fairytale.
Ten years on shores with none to rope them.
Nothing but ocean, sky and air.
And still covered with many years to clothe them,
Warmth that lasts what is still to bear.

PYTHIA shares a mischievous smile with us and fades again into the fog.

Ten years have passed since DANAË and PERSEUS arrived on the island of Seriphos. DANAË and DICTYS watch PERSEUS play with a small wooden sword on the beach, fighting back the waves. DANAË picks at olives leftover from their beach picnic, DICTYS ties fishing flies.

DICTYS

He has grown strong.

DANAË

He'll make a good fisherman.

DICTYS

If he wishes.

DANAË

He will.

DANAË notices a stone in the sand, she picks it up and holds it for a moment, then lets it fall.

DICTYS

Where do you go?

DANAË

Go?

DICTYS

In your mind—you go away.
For as long as I have known you.

DANAË

I don't know, I go to the wind.

DICTYS

But in the wind you sing.

DANAË

Well in the rain then.

DICTYS

There is no rain today Danae.

*DANAE sighs and looks at DICTYS, her eyes pool with tears.
DICTYS gathers her, and holds her, DANAE's head falling heavy on
his chest. They breathe here for a moment into the sounds of
waves and PERSUS's playful squeals.*

DICTYS

As always we do not have to talk about it, but I am here.

DANAE

He is a miracle.

DICTYS

I know it everyday.

DANAE

And his strength is a miracle.

DICTYS

He is stronger than most his age, and wiser too.

DANAE

It is not an accident.
It is divinity.

DICTYS

Divinity?

DANAE

The boys father—
I have never...
Perseus is half a god.

DICTYS looks at DANAE in shock, but not disbelief.

DICTYS

How do you know this?

DANAE

Because I have never laid with any man.

DICTYS

I had assumed your friend, your maid, oh- Dolius. I had assumed that she snuck someone in.

DANAE

She was the one sneaking in.

DANAE has never shared this with anyone before.

DICTYS

Oh.

Oh I see.

DANAE

And being locked away only made me more desirable, to him—he who takes what he cannot have.

DICTYS

...Zeus.

How did he come?

DANAE winces as she returns to the memory.

DANAE

Fire. He was fire, that dripped down from the ceiling and poured in like the bronze had hot hands all over me. I screamed out—

DICTYS

And your father did not run?

DANAE

I had not seen him in weeks.

Where I go is there. Into fire.

I have never told anyone, not a soul.

DICTYS

I am sorry.

DANAE

I wanted you to know.
You are my father now, Dictys.

DICTYS looks away from DANAE, letting the ocean wind conceal his tears.

DICTYS

I never thought I would have a child.
I am a lot like you, you know.
I have never had a wife..
I will never have a wife.

DANAE

Oh.
I see.

*DANAE and DICTYS smile at each other.
PERSEUS comes running and squealing towards them, and leaps into
DICTY's arms.
The waves smash into the shoreline—and all dissolves to fog.*

The Gorgons return and sing.

STHENO

Now the boy must grow.

EURYALE

Yes, to man?

MEDUSA

Almost.

STHENO and EURYALE turn to look at their sister.

STHENO

Sister, are there not maggots crawling from your eyes?

EURYALE

Is your head stitched on alright?

MEDUSA shivers, she grips her face as all three now see visions yet to come.

MEDUSA

My head! My lovely mushy head!

EURYALE

And gods will aid this act!

STHENO

To sink! To die!

MEDUSA

OH!

STHENO

Oh now!

EURYALE

Yes oh!

STHENO, EURYALE, and MEDUSA

Revenge tastes of copper and love, and twinges a bit with blood.

Crying or dying - a rip to the sore

An eye for an eye isn't won.

MEDUSA

We'll steal from the boy, from his wax-made wings
Which settle and seal in the sun.

STHENO and EURYALE

One head unmended,
Will be three hearts ended
And one head entirely done.

STHENO, EURYALE, and MEDUSA

The earth turns, the passing of seven more suns.

The fog fades again.

We return to the interior of DICTYS' shack. Seven more years have come and gone on the island of Seriphos. DANAЕ stands in the kitchen preparing figs with honey. DICTYS sits sketching by the fire. A now grown PERSEUS enters in a rush.

PERSEUS

The King!

DANAЕ

What of the King?

DICTYS

Polydectes?

PERSEUS

(Breathless)

The King—is coming.

DANAЕ

Here? Why would The King—

DICTYS

Danae, Perseus...There is something I have not told you.

I am—

PERSEUS

They're here!

The door of the tiny shack bursts open, in enter two guards and The King of Seriphos, POLYDECTES. The King looks around the shack, he touches a countertop and inspects the dust on his fingers.

POLYDECTES

Dictys, wonderful to share in your hospitality.

DICTYS

The pleasure is all ours.

POLYDECTES

I'm sure that it is.

POLYDECTES works his way around the tiny home, pocketing coins, shells, and other trinkets as he works. DICTYS rolls his eyes, while PERSEUS and DANAЕ stand stunned.

POLYDECTES

Not much to offer me today then Dictys.

DICTYS

You know I have nothing to spare..
Dear brother.

DANAЕ

Brother?

POLYDECTES

Did you not tell your pretty plaything?

PERSEUS

My mother is—!

PERSEUS with a fire in his fists, is held still by DICTYS.

POLYDECTES

An excellent liar you are Dictys.
You even neglected to tell your “dear brother” you had taken a wife.

DICTYS

She is not my wife.
She sought refuge—

POLYDECTES

How exotic, where are you from then—?

POLYDECTES approaches DANAЕ as he searches for her name.

DANAЕ

Danae.
And my home is Seriphos.

POLYDECTES

Ah, yes. Now it is.

Then you will take pride in becoming its queen.

DANAE and PERSEUS share a look. DANAE senses danger and quiets PERSEUS with her eyes.

DANAE

I am honored, but—

POLYDECTES pulls out a knife and wraps the blade swiftly around DANAE's neck. PERSEUS and DICTYS hold up their knives, but POLYDECTES is defended by his guards.

POLYDECTES

That was not a question my dear.

DANAE

Of course.

POLYDECTES

Thank you boys, we'll be on our way now.

POLYDECTES turns to go, moving DANAE with the point of his blade. Suddenly PERSEUS jumps into action. He quickly cuts down the guards who fall outside the shack, as DICTYS pulls DANAE away from The King's blade. PERSEUS grapples with POLYDECTES, until PERSEUS holds POLYDECTES at knife-point.

POLYDECTES laughs.

POLYDECTES

Oh my boy, you would not want to kill a King.

DICTYS

He's right. More soldiers will be here in moments. Let him go.

PERSEUS maintains his hold.

PERSEUS

You cannot have my mother.

POLYDECTES

She is what I desire.

PERSEUS

She is not something you can take.

POLYDECTES

I must have something boy, something to not execute you for what you have done.

DANAE

He's just a boy, I will go with you!

PERSEUS

I will give anything in exchange for my mother.

POLYDECTES thinks on this, he considers, he decides.

POLYDECTES

First, unhand me.

Tentatively PERSEUS lowers his blade. POLYDECTES sits at the small table and motions to DICTYS. DICTYS brings The King a glass from which he drinks. PERSEUS settles across from POLYDECTES at the table, while DANAE clings to DICTYS off to the side.

POLYDECTES

I seek a magical object. One that will bring me great power. All who I have set on the journey have failed.

PERSEUS

I shall not.

POLYDECTES

In the mountains of Cerna live three green sisters, with fangs, wings, and snakes for hair.

PERSEUS

Cerna?

DICTYS

Two-weeks travel, south, then west.

DANAE grabs DICTYS' arm, asking him not to encourage.

POLYDECTES

I seek the head of one of these sisters.

DANAE

The head of a woman?

POLYDECTES

Of a monster.

PERSEUS

I accept.

POLYDECTES

Ha!

DANAE

Perseus—

POLYDECTES

You have three moons.

DICTYS

Brother please, you cannot expect the boy—

POLYDECTES is already heading for the door, stopping to pop one of DANAE's figs into his mouth as he goes.

POLYDECTES

Did I forget to mention?

Only one of the sisters is mortal, only one can be killed.

With that POLYDECTES exits, slamming the door of the shack behind him.

DANAE, DICTYS, and PERSEUS look at each other in horror.

DICTYS

It is time he knows.

DANAE

I don't know.

DICTYS

He must know now, help could be—

DANAE

Perseus why did you agree to—?

PERSEUS

Mother, know what?

DANAE

Who your father is.

PERSEUS

But you've told me of my father's death and...

DANAE shakes her head slowly and softly takes her son's hand.

DANAE

You are a gift.

Given to me from the heavens.

PERSEUS looks confused, DICTYS nods in agreement and with a look of seriousness.

The idea comes to PERSEUS, he looks up in shock.

PERSEUS

My father...is a god?

DICTYS

Yes.

PERSEUS

Then this be my destiny.

DANAE

No, this is—

PERSEUS

Do you want to marry him?

DANAE

No, but Percy—

PERSEUS

Then you will not.

I will travel to Cerna, slay this monster, and return home with its head.

DICTYS

I have a map to guide you.

DANAE

Dictys!

DICTYS

It was only a matter of time. He was born to be a hero.

DANAE

He was born to be a boy, and to live.

He was born to be my son!

PERSEUS

Your son will not let a King steal you away.

DANAE looks at PERSEUS, she is seeing him grown for the first time.

DANAE

At times you do remind me of him.

PERSEUS

Of my father?

DANAE

No— No. I'm sorry, I have forgotten how much you have grown.

PERSEUS

I wish to do this for you mother.

DANAE looks at her son again, remembering how it felt to know him in her womb. The peace he brought her those nights alone in the palace, inside the sea-bound box, and all the days after. Tears begin but DANAE does not let them fall.

DANAE

You'll need plenty to eat.

DANAE begins gathering things for PERSEUS in the kitchen

DANAE

Dictys, can you help him ready the boat.

DICTYS

Of course.

DICTYS and PERSEUS head out to the port, on their way DANAE calls out to PERSEUS.

DANAE

Can you promise me one thing, my heart?

PERSEUS

Anything.

DANAE

Will you wait until sunrise?

PERSEUS

Yes.

*DANAE and PERSEUS share a tearful look at each other before he turns to run out the door.
Lights fade.*

Lights come up on the beach, DANAË sits in the sand beside a large wooden box. DICTYS approaches behind her.

DICTYS

I thought you hated this.

DANAË

No.

Today I wish I could seal us both back up inside it.

DICTYS

Danae.

DANAË

My life is loss, Dictys.

DICTYS

It is not.

The boy will return.

DANAË

But Dolius, my home—Argos, my—

DICTYS

Yesterday you said Seriphos is your home.

DANAË

Yes. But Argos—

DICTYS

I know.

DANAË

I do not want to spend my life waiting for men to return to me on ships.

DICTYS looks out across the sea, then back at DANAË.

DICTYS

Almost twenty years ago this box washed up at my port.

DANAE

I know, "and you pulled a woman and a baby from inside and you thought, this must be a gift from the gods"

DICTYS

It was.

It is.

DANAE

How can you let him go?

DICTYS

Well,

for the same reason I am giving you this.

DICTYS hands DANAE a map, on it is plotted a route from Seriphos to Argos.

DANAE

Dictys—

DICTYS

If your son is brave enough, why not you?

DANAE

They all believe me dead!

DICTYS

You need to see your father.

DANAE

You are my father!

What if he is dead? Or still mad?

I don't know...

DICTYS

If nothing else you will have something to do while Perseus is gone.

Instead of driving me mad with your worry!

DANAE and DICTYS laugh.

DANAE

We don't have another boat.

DICTYS

You will use mine.

DANAE

How will you fish?

DICTYS

I can go a few weeks without fish.

DANAE

You have planned.

DICTYS

For some time.

DANAE

What if Polydectes returns while I am gone?

DICTYS

He gave the boy three moons.

DANAE

Why did you never tell me?
That The King was your brother.

DICTYS

It has been so long. The last he came to steal from me was a particularly good year of fish, at least ten years before you arrived.

DANAE and DICTYS look at the box, both wondering what might have been had it not washed up on this shore.

DICTYS

I am surprised you have not questioned why I gave up the throne.

DANAE

No, this I know.

My father fought his own brother to the death for the throne of Argos.

The ocean breeze ceases while DANAE's words hang heavy in the thick air. It is as if time stands still on the island, memories fold into DANAE.

DANAE

When I was a girl I cared so much about how to be good.

DICTYS

I remember.

DANAE

Now I only want to be still.

I want everyone I love to stay still around me.

DICTYS

You are not made to be still.

DICTYS taps on the box.

DICTYS

Remember?

DANAE

A gift from the gods.

DANAE embraces DICTYS tightly.

They fade awash in the sound of waves.

PART III - STONE

DANAE walks searching with a lantern, illuminating her way-into fog.

She consults the map DICTYS gave her, she looks lost.

From out of the fog jumps PYTHIA.

PYTHIA

You!

I know you.

Surprise!

DANAE shrieks, but then sees that PYTHIA does not harm her.

DANAE

Please help me—I am lost. My son—

PYTHIA

Your.....SON?

DANAE

He is away, I am searching—

PYTHIA

So The King did not listen.

DANAE

Polydectes?

Please where am I?

PYTHIA

I know not.

You have grown.

Your face so full of lines, so much worry.

DANAE

Do I know you?

PYTHIA

As a girl I knew of your face.

PYTHIA receives visions of the past as she speaks to DANAË.

PYTHIA

The winds whipped the sea but you.....and baby,
freed onto sandy shores.

DANAË

Who are you?

PYTHIA

You know me child, as your father knew me.
You are called here..
...could it be this stone?

Pythia pulls out the wishing stone her father left as payment.

DANAË

My wishing stone!
I seek The King, is he alive?

PYTHIA

What is it you seek dear?
Dissolve to your desires.
Come and melt to me.

DANAË rushes to PYTHIA who holds her briefly.

DANAË

Home.
Argos.
Which way?

*PYTHIA points Danae down towards the city of Argos.
DANAË begins to move out of the mist.*

PYTHIA

But now I see...

*DANAË turns, a look over her shoulder.
PYTHIA is still entrenched in visions.*

PYTHIA

It was your father that set you adrift.
to swirl in sea scum, scraped up by Poseidon,
you and baby...

*She searches for the boy's name which slowly comes to her
tongue.*

PYTHIA

Perssssseus.

*The name seems to echo through the trees and mist a chorus of
Perseus over and over.*

DANAE

My son—do you know—

PYTHIA

I cannot see shadows protected by gods.
His father aids him, he is clumsy, but guarded.
His eyes,
Blue.
Like,
Acrisius.

Take this.

*PYTHIA hands DANAE the wishing stone.
She turns it over in her hand.*

DANAE

I plucked this from our stream when I was nine.
I held my hand in the water until it was numb.
I wanted to feel—
I wanted to feel what father felt,
and mother too.

He put the magic in it.
Mother died a week later.

PYTHIA

You are so like him.

DANAE

I don't know that I—

PYTHIA

But you long to know.
To feel.
The way that statues feel,
The stone,
like gods.

A new vision overtakes PYTHIA.

PYTHIA

Oh,
Gods,
Stone!

PYTHIA is submerged in her vision now. She is screaming, wailing at DANAE, who eventually runs down towards the city in fear.

PYTHIA

STONES!
YOU ARE STONE,
BLOODSTONE.
OH EARTH,
YOU ARE EARTH!
AND STONE STONE STONE
STONE
STONE!

PYTHIA and the fog fade again.

*Lights come up on DANAE as she reaches the fields of Argos.
It is midnight.
DANAE breathes a deep breath. The smell of her home fills her
lungs for the first time in almost twenty years.*

*She walks slowly through the field, moving ever closer to the
palace.*

Something in the field begins to move, parting the grass as it inches closer to DANAË.

She freezes in fear.

In the darkness DANAË looks down to see the creature moving slowly towards her.

The small black dog slowly nuzzles her legs.

DANAË

Argos!

DANAË holds the old dog to her. She sheds a tear.

DANAË

Did you wait for me, my good boy?

DANAË continues to pet and stroke Argos, who as if in answer lays his head heavy on her heart, and dies.

DANAË closes his eyes and lays him down gently in the grass. She wipes tears as she continues walking through the darkness.

DANAË reaches the palace gates, but as she is about to walk through them she turns.

Something pulls her another way.

DANAË rounds her way up the field, hearing the crickets of night, guided only by stars.

Towards her favorite fig tree.

DANAË reaches the hill, remembering her hours laying there with goats, she begins upward.

At the top of the hill stands the fig tree, ripe with fruit.

Below which sits The Old King, ACRISIUS.

DANAË approaches him slowly, afraid to make a noise. Afraid he may not be real. She reaches out her hand and is about to place it on ACRISUS's shoulder when he turns.

ACRISIUS

You know I can hear you.

DANAE

Father!

DANAE looks at him stunned for a moment, tears well up in each of their eyes. ACRISIUS gathers DANAE in his arms and holds her for quite a long time. They pull away and look at each other.

DANAE

I did not think I would find you.

ACRISIUS

I did not think you were alive.

DANAE

You look gray-er.
Your skin.

ACRISIUS

And you are more red.

DANAE

You owe me much!

ACRISIUS

I know my heart.
Sit here with me.

*DANAE and ACRISIUS sit below the fig tree, DANAE still clinging to ACRISIUS's arm.
They look up at the stars and constellations.*

DANAE

You used to show me this one.

DANAE points up in the sky.

ACRISIUS

Orion.

DANAE

Yes. I would find the three stars of his belt.
Did you know you can see the same stars from across the ocean?

ACRISIUS

You arrived safely, across the sea?

DANAE

I have lived well on the island of Seriphos, with the fisherman
Dictys, and my son.

ACRISIUS lets out an uncomfortable cough.

DANAE

Father, why did you send us away?

ACRISIUS

When I left those years ago I was not seeking your husband.
I ventured up to Delphi.

DANAE

You consulted the oracle?

ACRISIUS

Yes.

DANAE

Then it was her that gave me this.

*DANAE pulls the wishing stone out of her pocket, and places it
in ACRISUS's hand.*

ACRISIUS

My payment.

DANAE

Father, tell me.

ACRISIUS

She told me you would bear a son.

DANAE

As I have—

ACRISIUS

She told me too, that this son would stop my heart one day. That this son would be my end.

DANAE

Oh, father.

ACRISIUS

I wanted to keep you, I did not know what to do.

DANAE

So you locked me away.

ACRISIUS

I did not think that a god—

DANAE

I called out to you!

ACRISIUS

I was in such a madness.
Such a sickness.

The King composes himself.

DANAE

And before you had kept me away I was going to tell you—

ACRISIUS

Of Dolius?

DANAE

How do you know?

ACRISIUS

After I sent you and the boy away, she came to request her leave. She told me—

DANAE

She is gone?

ACRISIUS

I would not hold her.
Can you ever forgive me?

DANAE

I've come all this way in order to.

ACRISIUS holds DANAE, years of grief shedding between them.

DANAE

I have also come to say goodbye.

ACRISIUS

Danae, I have spent all my days mourning a life that I alone lost.

DANAE

But my son-

ACRISIUS

I no longer fear the prophecy.
I wish to meet the boy.

DANAE

And what if you die?

ACRISIUS

I have spent all my life wishing away that voice. I want to live the rest of my life as though I have never heard it.

DANAE

Oh, Father!

DANAE falls into ACRISIUS's arms and begins to sob. ACRISIUS holds her, confused.

ACRISIUS

What is it, my heart?

DANAE

Perseus, he is not home.

*DANAE looks at her father in worry and ACRISIUS pauses in fear.
Father and daughter then fade away into the fog.*

*Out emerges PYTHIA, hand in hand with MEDUSA
They sing to us.*

PYTHIA

The reason for war is women.

MEDUSA

The crunch of an apple, a garden to die.
Gifted box spills forth horrors,
so why—
must Heaven be so bent to Hades?

PYTHIA

Introduction to sin, no surprise,
That it drips in her hips, in her eyes,
and lives in the sound of all her goodbyes.

PYTHIA and MEDUSA

What good are women if they are not stone?

PYTHIA

Statues we build to give us a home.

MEDUSA

What good is a woman who cannot be still?
Held safe in the ground, deep under the hill.

PYTHIA and MEDUSA

And find here, look why here

MEDUSA

Heads fall off and fly here.

PYTHIA

Yet deep within the pool still stirs,
what's never been known,
and always been hers.

*PYTHIA takes MEDUSA's hand, she holds it tightly as the two
women look at each other. MEDUSA lets go.*

BLACKOUT.

MEDUSA screams.

STHENO and EURYALE scream and cry.

*Lights come up on the sunny fields of Argos. DANAË sits with
ACRISIUS in the field near the shore, goats surrounding them.*

In the distance DANAË notices something on the shore line.

DANAË

Father, do you have men returning?

ACRISIUS

They are not due back for another week at least.

DANAË

But that must be a ship.

*DANAË and ACRISIUS look out at the dot that inches closer to
their shore.*

ACRISIUS

It is certainly headed here...

DANAË

No-no that isn't a ship.

ACRISIUS

It isn't? My eyesight must be—

DANAE

It is a boat-I know this boat!

Before ACRISIUS can ask, DANAE is running towards the shore, goats following behind her.

ACRISIUS

Danae! Wait!

DANAE does not turn back, and The Old King begins to hop down the hill as fast as his legs will allow. ACRISIUS reaches the shore a few moments after DANAE, who stands waving at three figures in the boat approaching Argos.

ACRISIUS

Your son?

DANAE

Yes.

DANAE looks with worry at her father.

ACRISIUS

I cannot wait to meet him.

ACRISIUS gives DANAE a small squeeze as the boat pulls into port, PERSEUS running towards DANAE.

PERSEUS

Mother!

Mother, I have done it!

PERSEUS falls into DANAE's arms.

DANAE

My brave boy.

Perseus, I'd like you to meet your grandfather-

PERSEUS

The King Acrisius.

ACRISIUS

Perseus.

ACRISIUS reaches out a hand which PERSEUS ignores as he wraps his arms around his grandfather. Behind PERSEUS, another figure emerges from the boat.

DICTYS

Hello my girl.

DANAE

Dictys!

DANAE and DICTYS rush to each other, DICTYS gathering her in his arms.

ACRISIUS

So this is the famous fisherman.

DICTYS

Hello, Sir.

ACRISIUS

Wonderful to meet you.

DICTYS is now surprised as ACRISIUS wraps him in a hug.

Everyone laughs.

PERSEUS returns to the boat, to help the final traveler step on to shore.

PERSEUS

Mother, this is Andromeda.
She is to be my wife.

DANAE

(Tearfully, Joyfully)
Oh, well hello!

ANDROMEDA

Perseus has told me much of you, of your bravery.

DANAE

Of mine?

PERSEUS

Yes mother.

ACRISIUS

We must prepare a feast!

DANAE turns to her son, and whispers.

DANAE

What of Polydectes? Of Seriphos?

PERSEUS

He is defeated, mother.

DANAE

How?

PERSEUS

With this!

From the boat PERSEUS pulls a large package wrapped in paper.

DANAE

...her head?

PERSEUS

Yes.

A bit easier than I expected.

DANAE

Heads tend to be.

DANAE looks at the package, curious, she takes it from PERSEUS's hands.

ANDROMEDA speaks with ACRISIUS

ANDROMEDA

...he saved my life...

DICTYS

You are a true hero, my boy.

ACRISIUS, DICTYS, PERSEUS, and ANDROMEDA begin to walk back up the hill towards the palace.

ACRISIUS

Not just a hero, but a king if you wish.

PERSEUS

King?

ACRISIUS

You are the heir of Argos.

PERSEUS

I had never imagined..

PERSEUS looks to ANDROMEDA who gives a nod of approval.

ACRISIUS

Good. I am looking forward to retirement.
Argos could also use a fisherman.

DICTYS

I would be honored to stay, sir.

PERSEUS

Mother, can you believe our luck?

PERSEUS turns to see the look of joy on DANAË's face, but only sees his mother still at shore. Sitting with MEDUSA's unwrapped head in her lap.

DANAË now statue-stone.

END of PLAY.