

13th God

by Rose Scollard



13th God

Rose Scollard

BIO/ROSE SCOLLARD

ROSE SCOLLARD co-founder of Maenad Productions, Western Canada's first woman-centred theatre, has over thirty professionally produced stage and radio dramas. She is co-author with Caroline Russell King of *Strategies: The Business of Being a Playwright in Canada* (Playwrights Union of Canada, 2000).

In 1996 she was a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, an international award for literary excellence in women playwrights; her entry, *Shea of the White Hands*, was a modern day version of the Tristan and Isolde legend.

In 1997 she was playwright-in-residence at the University of Calgary under the Markin-Flanagan Distinguished Writers Programme. During her residency she completed *Caves of Fancy*, a play about Mary Shelley, her mother Mary Wollstonecraft and her Monster ~ Frankenstein's Creature, which was fully staged and presented at an international conference on the famous mother/daughter duo at the University of Calgary in the summer of 1997. *Caves of Fancy* was published in *Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley: Writing Lives* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2001).

In June of 2003 she signed an agreement with Alexander Street Press in Alexandria, Virginia to include 15 of her plays in *North American Women's Drama* an electronic research and study collection for university libraries.

Her play *Firebird* published in *TYA 5* (Playwrights Canada Press 1988), has been translated into German by Ute Scharfenberg, dramaturge of Freie Kammerspiele of Magdeberg Germany. *Feuervogel* received its European premiere in December of 2003. The production was remounted in 2004.

13th God premiered with Maenad Productions in June of 1989 at the Pumphouse Theatre.

The cast and creative team were as follows:

Kim Cayer	Marina/Ariadne/Bonnie/Naïve Caryatid
Michele Fansett	Delphine/Nora/Caryatid
John Hudson	Orpheus/Deianeiros/Theseus
Jim Leyden	Theo
Chris Youngren	Peleus, The Tourist. Also Edward, Daedalus, and Waiter
Alexandria Patience	Bea/Lina/Pasiphae/Cassie/ Knowing Caryatid
Brenda Anderson	Director
Kevin Labchuk	Composer
Kevin Smith	Designer
Nicole Mion	Choreographer
Sandi Somers	Lighting Designer
Randall Fraser	Mask Maker
Charlene Minifie	Sound Operator
Ian Chiclo	lighting Operator
Lillian Messer	Costumier
Nancy Cullen	Box Office Goddess

Soundscape:

The action occurs against a specially written soundscape. Haunting turbulent music intertwines with the words and, where appropriate, joins them in song and incantation.

Dance

Movement and dance are an integral part of this theatre piece. More than anything Dionysos was Lord of the Dance. His maenads danced themselves into a frenzied, ecstatic state in his worship.

Set

The set is multileveled, non realistic, piecemeal jumble of Greek statues, ruins vases, overflowing plants, shrubs, couches, pillars. Among the props needed are a man-sized set of artificial wings, a large fabric body for Orpheus, a replica of a cow that a woman could hide in.

The set props and costumes may be as minimal or as detailed, with as many artists collaborating, as the budget permits. The overall effect however should be luxuriant with a sense of nature and imagination run riot. The language in the play is this way also. It has been touched by the muse; it sprouts and blossoms to excess in the presence of the God.

Characters

There are three men and three women each shifting back and forth in a variety of roles that demonstrate different facets of their essential nature. Whatever role they play, their lines are always identified in the text by their main name.

Marina	The daughter. Also the young Ariadne, the naïve Caryatid and the childish Old Tourist.
Bea	The mother. Also Lina, Pasiphae, the keen Old Tourist and the experienced Caryatid
Delphine	the Old Woman. Also the knowing Old tourist, the third Caryatid, Pasiphae's Maid and Ariadne in old age.
Orpheus	Disembodied Head. Also (with body) Deianeiros and Theseus.
Peleus	The Tourist. Also Edward, Daedalus, and Waiter
Theo	Dionysos

ACT ONE

[Strange spaceless and timeless bits of music. Erie, silvery uncertain lights indicate a state of chaos or limbo.

Three female figures, suggestive of the three fates, crouch over a recumbent figure. One, DELPHINE, is sewing on the figure; another, BEA, is sitting on the ground examining her feet. The third, MARINA, is spinning a distaff, feeding thread to the needle of the sewer. The light is erratic and dim and we can only just make them out).]

MARINA: Are you sure this is the right one?

DELPHINE: Don't be ridiculous.

MARINA: I don't like it. We're not even sure that it's time.

BEA: It's time. The signs are unmistakable. Look *[Holds up a sprig then sniffs at it.]* Chamomile. My feet were bushy with it this morning. In the cracks of my toes. Sprouting up from under the nails.

MARINA: I picked a leaf off my breast this morning.

BEA: You'll be turning into a willow again, if you're not careful. You'd better give yourself a thorough going over.

[MARINA examines herself, causing the thread to tangle.]

DELPHINE: Stop that! *[She yanks at thread, makes a final stitch or two.]* Where are those shears?

[MARINA leaps up and snips the thread where DELPHINE indicates. DELPHINE looks down at her handiwork with satisfaction.]

BEA: Not much to look at, is he. Did you mean him to be that short?

DELPHINE: What's wrong with short? I knew someone once, a sawed off, lippy little guy. He really appealed to me.

BEA: You might have thought of the rest of us. What kind of manic rout will it be with this puny little twig!

DELPHINE: That's the trouble with you two. All you ever think about is the rout.

BEA: Isn't that what it's all about? Running rampant through the undergrowth. Dancing ourselves into exhaustion.

DELPHINE: It's time we imposed a structure on our rampaging.

MARINA: All we want is a little fun.

DELPHINE: Fun doesn't enter into it. Come now. With mother and daughter as models we will examine the threefold nature of the god — sorcerer, beast and jester. *[Stepping slightly apart from the others she holds up a moon mask.]*

MARINA: There she goes again with that threefold business. Sorcerer, Beast...

DELPHINE: To the girl, the sorcerer.

BEA: Don't worry. It will go the way it always does, no matter how she cuts the thread. Or bays at the moon.

DELPHINE: To the woman, the beast.

MARINA: You mean the frenzy will win?

BEA: It probably won't be clear.

MARINA: Nothing is ever clear. I hate the way it shifts in and out of focus.

DELPHINE: Let us dance together in affirmation of the old cycles. Struggle and release. *[Looks at BEA]*

BEA: *[Reluctantly]* Worship and sacrifice. *[Looks at MARINA]*

MARINA: *[Scowling but giving in]* Death and rebirth.

DELPHINE: The dance. The maenadic holy frenzy where everything is broken down and begins again.

[Finally persuaded, the two women begin a slow dance, to sinuous music.]

BEA: When I take the thrysos in my hand I am at once found and lost, forever lost.

MARINA: The others catch me about the waist and move with me in the same slow anguish.

DELPHINE: The grass springs anew underfoot, the hills leap above us, the trees burst into creation as we dance.

MARINA: Everything is formed by the dance...

BEA: And destroyed by it.

[All sing]

We dance. We dance the creation of men.

We dance. We dance the destruction of men.

We dance. We dance to forget.

We dance to remember

We dance for consolation.

We dance.
We dance.
We dance power back into our lives.
We dance.
We dance.
We dance the sheer exhaustion of things.

[Music continues and as they dance they drift by an Orphic head not far from the sleeping figure, a decadent, phantasmagorical, androgynous combination of human botanical elements. A flower sprouts from an eye, a vine circles about the neck and trails downward. Just waking up, he notices the women.]

ORPHEUS: Who's that!

[Paying no heed, the three women continue their slow and insinuating line dance. Their heads, now that we can see them a little better, are feral, (horse, wolf or gorgonish masks not quite human. The light emphasizes the sensuous swiveling of their hips and bellies and their black draperies.)]

ORPHEUS: Wait! Who are you? Dammit! I drop off for three minutes and miss the only action around here in centuries. Hey! My face! I'm covered in shrubbery. It must be that time again. It's certainly due. How long's it been? Years. Centuries. *[Looks at sleeping figure DELPHINE was sewing on.]* Aeons, judging from the shape *he's* in.

Theo! *[Grunt from sleeper]* Time to wake up, Theo. *[The sleeper rolls over and ORPHEUS gets a better view of him.]* Dear Apollo, look at him! He's never going to pull it off with that body. Theeee-o! Wake up! Are you listening to me?

[THEO grunts]

ORPHEUS: It's time, Theo. Look at the way I'm sprouting. It's time to call up all the old powers again. Set the whole thing in motion. But...perhaps you don't remember.

THEO: *[Drowsy]* I remember. A bee, pollen heavy, pulling down a blossom. A dead twig wriggling into snaky life.

ORPHEUS: Let's not have any more sprouting

THEO: The Argive women rending their children.

ORPHEUS: That's a topic I'd rather not hear about.

THEO: The hot smell of blood, the sound of ripping flesh

ORPHEUS: So you remember. Enough!

[The dancing of the women takes on a savage note. The music is wilder.]

THEO: Blood! Mania! He takes an axe to his son! Mare-headed woman. The Centaur screams and dies!

ORPHEUS:

Enough!

[THEO sits up suddenly, searches about, finds a bottle of wine and takes a long swig and then sees Orpheus for the first time.]

THEO: Oh my God, Orphy. Look at you! What happened?

ORPHEUS: You should know.

THEO: I did this to you?

ORPHEUS: Your women did.

THEO: Did you resist me, or something?

ORPHEUS: Let's say you didn't care for my philosophical orientation.

THEO: It's all that cerebral shit you spout, Orphy. You never did learn the art of small talk. Ah! The wine is doing it's work. Time to get the show on the road. *[Stands up, raises hands, then pauses, not quite sure what to do next.]* Umm. Ahh...

ORPHEUS: What if you can't get it on the road?

THEO: Are you kidding?

ORPHEUS: Even gods wear down, Theo

THEO: I'm in better shape than I ever was, *[Looks at himself]* though I don't remember being this short. But Hey. It doesn't make any difference. Short or tall, the power's still there. *[Clears his throat, raises his hands, but stalls again.]* Don't just sit there. Help me.

ORPHEUS: Mental powers fading too? *[Prompting]* Let it start with the moon. The milky moon.

THEO: Right! The moon! *[Snaps fingers]*

ORPHEUS: And the women, their delicious limbs clean cut as marble, and their red red lips.

THEO: Women!

ORPHEUS: The partridge, the brushwood maze, the thrysos and lingam, let them all be readied.

THEO: *[Snaps his fingers at each item]* And?

ORPHEUS: That's it.

THEO: No, there's more. You're hedging, Orphy.

ORPHEUS: That's all I remember.

THEO: Moon, women, partridges, thrysos, lingam, maze... *[Pauses]* Dance! That's it! The dance. And most of all let there be dancing, the maenadic holy frenzy where everything is broken down and begins again. *[ORPHEUS shudders.]* You've got something against dancing?

ORPHEUS: It's the frenzy I don't care for. I don't see why everything has to be so uncivilized.

THEO: The frenzy is *everything*. *[To the skies.]* Come on, come on, come on! Let's get with it! I said, *move* it!

[Nothing happens.]

THEO: Let it begi-i-i-in!

DELPHINE enters, dressed from head to toe in black, in the Greek manner of widows. Though oldish, she's slender, limber, with good legs and a sharp tongue, athletically able for anything that may happen.]

DELPHINE: What's all the fuss about?

THEO: Well, if it isn't...uh...who is this?

ORPHEUS: Beats me.

THEO: *[Snaps his fingers trying to recall who she is]* Artemis? Rhea. Delphine. Delphine isn't it?

DELPHINE: Delphine will do. What was all the shouting about?

THEO: I'm in the process of making a comeback. I'm about to take the world by storm.

DELPHINE: You?

THEO: Yes, me. You're looking at a world class deity here. Magnificent and all powerful. What are you doing here, anyway?

DELPHINE: I was summoned, wasn't I?

THEO: You aren't exactly what I had in mind. But since you're here, there must be something useful you could do. I know, you can hunt up properties for this show.

DELPHINE: You have a list?

THEO: Just bring anything you can get your hands on. Fennel wands, panther skins. And don't forget the girls. I need lots of girls.

[DELPHINE is about to exit when ORPHEUS beckons to her.]

ORPHEUS: Psst. Over here. There's something you could do for me. Come closer. *[She bends over him. He whispers in her ear.]*

DELPHINE: I'll see what I can do.

ORPHEUS: Just don't bring one of those satyr rigs. I want something with a little dignity.

THEO: We need more wine, too.

[DELPHINE leaves in a way that is slightly threatening to THEO.]

THEO: Touchy.

ORPHEUS: She seems to have some sort of grudge against you. Someone from your past? I don't remember a Delphine.

THEO: Neither do I. Who could she be?

ORPHEUS: Your Aunt Hera? Still seeking to destroy you after all these years.

THEO: Na. Hera would be more ravaging. The ultimate bitch goddess.

ORPHEUS: Thetis?

THEO: Thetis was crazy about me. Most likely, she's nobody, just an old woman looking for excitement. So where were we? Women. Moon. Hell, it's just not jiving. Maybe if I had better words. Do you still have any of your poems?

ORPHEUS: A few. In that box.

THEO: *[Pulls out a sheaf of papers and mumbles over a few pages.]* I don't know Orphy. This stuff reads like an old maid's diary. The event I'm planning, it's wild, you know what I mean? Dithyrambic! Maenads raging. Satyrs with huge dongs leaping about. Dancing, feasting, tearing bulls apart.

ORPHEUS: I'm not crazy about all that sex and violence. It's intellectual entanglement I want. Emotional grappling in the dark spirals of the libido.

THEO: I guess in your state a guy doesn't go in for the usual entertainments.

ORPHEUS: All I'm suggesting is you get away from the maenad and satyr routine. The dancing and orgies.

THEO: I *want* the orgies. Only a fool would want something else. *[Holds up a page.]* This looks good. "Let the sacred ivy bud and the dark grape flower".

ORPHEUS: Tone it down! You're making me sprout!

THEO: I told you I still had the power.

ORPHEUS: Yes. Your vegetative aspect's in full working order.

THEO: Some of this is not bad. "Manic women tempest-tossed with love, gleam like pearls through rage-tangled hair." I like it. Manic women tempest... *[Stands up, raising arms in all-encompassing gesture.]* Manic women tempest-tossed with love! Manic women tempest tossed with love! Come to me! *Come to me!*

[DELPHINE returns, wheeling in the requested props.]

THEO: Where are the girls?

DELPHINE: There are a couple of tourists from the hotel headed this way.

THEO: Tourists! I want hot-blooded maenads. What's all this?

DELPHINE: This is all I could scrounge.

THEO: What am I supposed to do with one Ionic pillar? Or this moth eaten cloak? Plastic ivy?

DELPHINE: The grapes are real.

THEO: *[Tastes one and grimaces.]* One broken pair of wings. Three spools of red ribbon. A parasol. Damaged. Two phalloi birds. One...Do you mind telling me what this is?

[He indicates the largest of the props: a poorly built openwork frame with four legs and a cow hide draped over it. At the back of this object a long tail is pinned and at the front sit a pair of lopsided horns.]

DELPHINE: You said to bring whatever I could get my hands on.

THEO: We can't build a comeback with these. Not the kind of spectacle I have in mind.

DELPHINE: We could do a fairly good portrayal of the Cretan cycle.

ORPHEUS: The Cretan cycle. I like it. Daedalus the artificer. Pasiphae's lust for the bull. And no one gets torn apart.

THEO: Yes, yes. But what's the Cretan cycle got to do with me?

DELPHINE: Everything! You're the centre of the Maze, the dark mysterious figure.

THEO: Boring.

DELPHINE: The sinister counterpart to the hero.

THEO: So?

DELPHINE: You get the girl in the end.

THEO: Tell me more.

DELPHINE: I see it beginning in chaos. Sound. Light. Formless movement. There is an air of expectancy and dread. Then a figure appears, a dark cloaked figure, *[DELPHINE drapes the cloak round Theo's shoulders]* reminiscent of Prospero, a figure of great power and energy.

THEO: I like it. *[Adjusts the cloak.]* Chaos, you say. Ought to be able to work in a Maenadic number or two. *[He sorts through the jumble and plops the horned crown on his head. He spots the long narrow box.]* Here's something I missed.

ORPHEUS: A little request I made.

THEO: *[Opening box]* A body! You ordered a body without asking me?

ORPHEUS: I didn't think you'd mind.

THEO: Well I do mind. What do you need a body for?

DELPHINE: We need a love interest.

THEO: I'm the love interest.

DELPHINE: You're the god.

THEO: You said I got the girl.

DELPHINE: You do in the end.

ORPHEUS: But she falls in love with me first.

THEO: I'll play both parts.

ORPHEUS: Come on Theo. Let me run loose for a bit. What harm can it do?

THEO: I don't know. Let's have a look at it.

[DELPHINE unrolls it, a huge cloth body.]

THEO: It's too big.

DELPHINE: It was the only size they had.

THEO: He can't have a bigger body than mine.

ORPHEUS: But I'm the love interest.

THEO: It has to be changed. You can take those in for a start.

ORPHEUS: What!

THEO: He can have a bigger body than mine but not bigger balls.

[DELPHINE sews on the body while ORPHEUS looks on, anxious that she doesn't take him in too much.]

DELPHINE: It's a great body.

ORPHEUS: It would be without all those darts and tucks.

DELPHINE: Don't worry. There's plenty of room for expansion.

[DELPHINE breaks off her thread and holds up the body. She then wheels ORPHEUS off to help him into it. THEO fools about with props, trying on masks etc. DELPHINE comes back.]

DELPHINE: That's that

THEO: So What exactly is this story we're going to do?

DELPHINE: You should know. It was part of your life.

THEO: Refresh my memory.

DELPHINE: It starts out in the usual way. Girl meets boy.

[In background MARINA in Girl Mask dances slowly into view. ORPHEUS in Boy Mask meets her and joins hands.]

THEO: Me?

DELPHINE: No. Orphy's playing that role. I told you.

THEO: O.K. O.K. How do *I* come into it.

DELPHINE: I'm getting to it. Next, boy meets mother.

[BEA comes in wearing Mother Mask.]

THEO: Ah! A triangle.

DELPHINE: Mother threatens boy.

[BEA seems to gain stature. ORPHEUS withers.]

THEO: Good.

DELPHINE: Girl saves boy.

[MARINA guides ORPHEUS to a higher level, thus diminishing BEA.]

DELPHINE: Boy abandons girl.

[ORPHEUS leaves. MARINA looks sadly after him.]

THEO: She could have seen that coming.

DELPHINE: God comforts girl.

[Masked Dionysian figure enters and comforts MARINA with grapes. The lights brighten on the two and then fade.]

THEO: That's more like it! *[Looks at props in disgust.]* We're going to need a lot more than this to get anything going. And we're going to need more women!

[DELPHINE and THEO exit with props. In the distance wild pan flute and tambourine music is heard. The lights swirl slightly and come up on BEA and MARINA as tourists.

The quality of light changes. Until now it has been silvery — now it's more normal.]

BEA: This is not the kind of Greek Island I had in mind. It's so overgrown, so isolated. It's all your father's fault.

MARINA: Father said he'd join us in a couple of days.

BEA: He should have been with us from the beginning. Then we wouldn't have been sidetracked to this out-of-the-way place.

MARINA: But it's so beautiful

BEA: It's so pagan. I half expect little goat men to come bounding out of the shrubbery. All this growth!

MARINA: Everything seems to have burst into flower overnight.

BEA: And the vines. Vines everywhere — with grapes on them. Grapes in the spring; that can't be normal. I don't like nature getting out of hand like this. We're getting out of here on the next boat. Go to a real Greek island. With white rocks and sunshine and platinum beaches. Somewhere you can find yourself a nice young man.

MARINA: It is unusual. The flowers the leaves, everything pumped up into supernatural lushness, as if the island it anticipating something. Lush vibrant. And expectant.

BEA: Expectant. What an odd idea.

MARINA: I feel strange too, as though I'm *[beat]* inside a dance.

BEA: How can you be inside a dance?

MARINA: *[Moving in a slow dancelike fashion]* It's this place. It pulses underfoot like a living being. It breathes with a lover's calm.

BEA: We've come far enough! We're heading back to the hotel, right now.

MARINA: You go, Mother. I want to stay a while. Perhaps I'll sit here and read my book.

BEA: *[Taking book]* I haven't seen this before.

MARINA: I found it in Kavalla. It's an old memoir. Someone who was here once, long ago.

BEA: It's falling apart in my hands. Must be old.

MARINA: It's by a woman who came her with her husband. He was an antiquarian and he wanted her to stay in her room while he went about digging up old ruins. What she wanted was to run loose in the countryside and dance.

[MARINA dances a few steps, in a manner reminiscent of a Greek line dance.]

MARINA: Oh! What is that glorious fragrance?

[ORPHEUS/DEIANEIROs enters as she talks. He is slightly overripe, almost overweight, a little gone to seed, but enigmatically attractive, emanating power. He is prosperous looking, slightly oily. His dark hair, streaked beautifully with grey, is curly, almost decadently long. His white shirt falls open at the throat, revealing a silver thyrsus hanging pendant fashion.]

ORPHEUS: It's the chamomile.

MARINA: *[She jumps a little.]* You startled me!

ORPHEUS: It's the chamomile you smell. *[He plucks a piece from between the flagstones and holds it out. She sniffs at it delicately.]* Here. Let me crush it a little. *[MARINA breathes deeply.]* Some things must be crushed to be enjoyed.

MARINA: We were saying how unusual it is. The way everything has sprung into bloom overnight.

BEA: I don't like it. All this oozing and blossoming.

ORPHEUS: Sometimes one must acknowledge that nature has a responsive side. That a god's time takes precedence over the schedule man imposes on things. The flowers are blooming earlier. The grapes ripen on the vine. The island breathes with a lover's calm.

MARINA: What an unusual thing to say.

BEA: You said it yourself just two minutes ago.

MARINA: But lovers aren't calm at all.

ORPHEUS: No. *[Takes her hand.]* Which is all the more reason to seek out the dark spirals of entanglement

BEA: *[Pulling Marina away.]* We'd better head back now, Marina.

MARINA: Entanglement! Yes!

BEA: We really must be going. So nice to have met you.

ORPHEUS: We'll meet again I'm sure. We have some festivities planned. I'm sure you'll want to take part.

BEA: Festivities! Some pagan rituals, more like. Orgies and God knows what!

MARINA: Look! A poppy. It's too early for poppies

BEA: *[Pulling her on.]* I know nothing of the time table of poppies. I want to get to somewhere bright and cheerful with masses of people and crowded with events.

MARINA: This place is pregnant with events.

BEA: Stop saying things like that, Marina. Oh, I wish your father were here.

[The women exit.]

THEO: What do you think you're up to? You're stealing my lines. All that shit about time and nature. I should be saying that.

ORPHEUS: I just said the first thing that came to mind. No harm intended.

THEO: And that body. You should be brassy and macho, not alluring and mysterious. It's not right.

ORPHEUS: I'm just doing what I'm supposed to — getting her to fall in love with me.

THEO: It's the way you're going about it. You're the hero. You're not supposed to have an air of mystery about you. You're too oozy and languid. Sharpen up. Do a few pushups.

ORPHEUS: I'll do my best, Theo. *[Inhales the perfume from the chamomile he's holding, smiles mysteriously and exits.]*

[A great snuffling, snorting sound. PELEUS DRAKE enters.]

THEO: What the hell was that?

PELEUS: It's a bull. Over there in the field. Some animal, hey?

THEO: Damn that Delphine and all her threefold nonsense. Why can't we just have a simple bacchic rout? *[Exits.]*

[Spot on café area of hotel. A male mannequin in tight shorts and sun glasses is posed there. DELPHINE as NORA, an elderly tourist, is at the table drinking wine and writing postcards. She is seated in a suggestive, slightly vulgar relationship to the Mannequin.]

DELPHINE: Dear Nonie. This place is incredible, repeat incredible! I have the feeling anything could happen here. The men are incredible too. Compact torsos. Wonderful thighs. I'd like to get my hands on one or two of them. Wish you were here, Nora.

[BEA/CASSIE and MARINA/BONNIE, elderly tourists, enter.]

DELPHINE: What kept you? You've missed a dozen opportunities.

BEA: We had to think about it. Or at least Bonnie here did. She's still not sure.

MARINA: They're just out to exploit us, you know. Women who are lonely or in need of companionship.

BEA: I'm not lonely or in need of companionship. I'm in need of that! *[They look in awe at a young man who passes by in shorts or at mannequin in shorts.]*

MARINA: Cassie!

BEA: I don't see why women can't be the sexploiters.

MARINA: Because women don't... Women our age...they aren't supposed to.

DELPHINE: That's it exactly. We aren't supposed to.

BEA: I can think of a thousand endings to that sentence. Women our age aren't supposed to have lusty desires. Women our age aren't supposed to think about exploiting young men. We aren't supposed to be anything but victims.

MARINA: I'm sure there are drawbacks to this you haven't considered.

DELPHINE: Sure there are. But a few rules can minimize them. First rule, don't get involved. If he gets sentimental, drop him. If he complains about your coldness it means he's placed a higher value on his worth than you have. Remember, it's just a way to satisfy your sexual appetites.

[MARINA/BONNIE groans throughout this.]

BEA: Lighten up, Bonnie. How can we have any fun?

MARINA: Picking up young men. What would my husband say?

DELPHINE: How would he know? As far as he's concerned, you're doing what you do on every other holiday — shopping.

MARINA: What if he wants to see what I bought?

BEA: Show him what you bought last year. He won't know the difference. So tell us, Nora. I gather you've had lots of experience.

DELPHINE: I met my first two years ago in a life studies class. Every woman of a certain age should take life studies.

MARINA: Life studies. With nude models?

DELPHINE: I have some polaroids of my work here somewhere. *[Pulls snaps from bag. BEA takes them eagerly. MARINA looks over her shoulder.]*

MARINA: I don't see anything but a chalky white blob with black things sprouting out of it.

DELPHINE: That's his leg. Upper inner thigh. He had a lovely upper inner thigh. I still think of it.

MARINA: I never saw a thigh like this.

BEA: It's a painting, Bonnie. *Art.*

MARINA: But these are all thighs.

DELPHINE: Well yes. Thighs are my forte. A good thigh is both limpid and dangerous. You should be able to see the vines sprout, the tendrils curl. A good thigh is trapped in aesthetics and yet ready to burst the vegetable bonds.

MARINA: What's all this dark grassy stuff in the corner?

BEA: What? *[Looks and grabs photo from her.]* Give me that!

DELPHINE: That's his patch.

MARINA: What's a patch?

BEA: You're going to have us kicked out of here.

MARINA: Oh [*Giggles nervously*] his *patch*. [*They all laugh*] I can't believe there isn't a down side to this.

DELPHINE: There is. In the end they're unsatisfying. They have no imagination. Their bodies are nice but all they ever talk about is clothes and cars and what they'll do when they're rich. The gratification is fleeting.

BEA: But it's still gratification. Why don't we head for the beach. Better prospects there.

DELPHINE: You go ahead. I just want to finish this card.

[BEA and MARINA exit. PELEUS DRAKE enters]

PELEUS: May I join you?

DELPHINE: Suit yourself

PELEUS: Peleus Drake. My wife is in her room.

DELPHINE: [*Continuing with her postcards*] really.

PELEUS: She doesn't like it here. She's afraid she'll spill over into other categories — animal, vegetable, perhaps even mineral. And it's true. Don't you get the feeling here that everything is lax at the boundaries, ready to melt from one state into the next?

DELPHINE: You could be right.

PELEUS: You hear something shift in the undergrowth and wonder — is it a fox looking for grapes? Or did that statue move? That kind of thing.

DELPHINE: [*Non-committal grunt.*]

PELEUS: Or that feral odour in the air. Is it an animal? Or a crushed bush?

DELPHINE: Animal, I'd say. But then my family was always more faunal than floral.

PELEUS: [*Laughs uproariously.*] You're my kind of woman. Let me buy you a drink.

DELPHINE: I usually drink with younger men.

PELEUS: Younger men. What a kidder. Waiter, bring up a bottle of your best wine. Yes. I can see that you're not bothered at all by the problem of uncertain boundaries.

DELPHINE: I don't dwell on it.

PELEUS: For myself, I find it intriguing. Take last night. I dreamt I was a daisy, tall stemmed with feathery leaves, opening out to the kiss of day, spreading myself thin on the shoulder of the hill.

DELPHINE: Fascinating.

PELEUS: Until I was plucked by the teasing hand of a maid and poked into her civet smelling hair, nestled into that moistly joined corner of flesh. I loved being that daisy, as I would have loved being the goat that munched on me, or the herder who lopped off my head with his stick and blew his nose in his fingers, or the tree he leaned against, grey-leaved and silvery with bark as smooth as a woman's breast.

[PELEUS and DELPHINE freeze and the lights spot THEO who is drinking at another table. He rises as tourists MARINA and BEA enter.]

THEO: Will you join me for a drink? The wine here is excellent.

MARINA: We were heading for our rooms.

BEA: Don't be standoffish, Marina. This is the first civilized gesture that's been made to us in this place. We'd love to join you.

THEO: You're feeling a little disoriented? *[He helps them into chairs and pours wine.]*

BEA: It's that kind of place isn't it. From the moment we arrived nothing has seemed normal.

THEO: To your hearts desire.

BEA: Hmmm, very nice. Try some, Marina. *[MARINA takes a tentative sip.]* I understand there's a festival taking place here.

THEO: Nothing much. A little pageant in honour of the god. I'm in charge of the festivities.

MARINA: You?

[BEA has drained her wine and THEO pours her another. From the drinking of the wine and throughout this scene, in the presence of THEO she seems a little overblown, a little mad.]

BEA: I'm not surprised. There's a storm building up here, a disturbance, and you...you are at the centre. Tell me all about yourself.

THEO: I don't know what to say.

BEA: Whatever you say will be relevant.

THEO: Well...I was born after the death of my mother.

BEA: Transcendent!

THEO: I had a very wicked aunt. Couldn't keep her hands off me.

BEA: Sexually? *[MARINA jostles her arm in embarrassment.]*

THEO: That was taken care of by others.

BEA: This wine is very strong. It's gone right to my head.

MARINA: We know.

BEA: I feel such rapport with you. You understand the problems of women.

[MARINA, BEA and THEO freeze. Spot on DELPHINE and PELEUS]

PELEUS: So what brings you to Greece, apart from the younger men.

DELPHINE: Nasty apparitions.

PELEUS: Really. Anything in particular?

DELPHINE: Here, I took pictures.

PELEUS: I hope you're not sending this through the mail. Where did this apparition appear to you?

DELPHINE: In the fruit basket mainly. Sometimes in the linen cupboard or the knife and fork drawer.

PELEUS: Somehow I can't imagine it curled up among the grapefruit spoons

DELPHINE: It was usually erect.

PELEUS: Why do you suppose it appeared to you, at your age?

DELPHINE: It was just looking for attention. I ignored it, for the most part. As you can see it's nothing to write home about, I've seen better on the mailman. Then one day my church was having a strawberry tea. The rector was chatting with me on the settee when it suddenly appeared, fully tensile, in a plate of Nanaimo bars. I snatched it up with the sugar tongs. I'm surprised now at my presence of mind. But it was the rector's sanity and faith I was worried about. I was half way to the window when the rector's wife walked in. I feared even more for her sanity.

PELEUS: What did you do?

DELPHINE: Dropped it into the closest receptacle I could find. The tea pot.

PELEUS: Oh my God! In the hot water?

DELPHINE: It screamed.

PELEUS: How could it?

DELPHINE: It screamed like a banshee. The rector, bless his heart, thought we'd been suddenly possessed with demons. He sent his wife from the room and started hunting through his prayer book for the exorcism rite. While he was muttering prayers and crossing himself, I grabbed the pot and flung the contents out the window. It fell from the pot and got itself impaled on a rosebush. Before I could do anything about it a magpie flew off with it. They'll take anything, you know. I could hear the damn thing screaming long after it was out of sight. Right then, I decided to come to Greece.

[PELEUS and DELPHINE freeze. Spot on THEO, BEA and MARINA. THEO pours more wine.]

BEA: Tell us about your part in the festivities.

THEO: I am Dionysos.

MARINA: You?

THEO: The Thirteenth God.

BEA: The god of wine and revelry.

THEO: I represent much more than wine. You've noticed how lush everything is?

BEA: Incredibly lush.

THEO: And yourself? The feeling of ancient energies and desires pumping through your veins?

BEA: Pumping! Yes!

THEO: And you?

MARINA: I wouldn't quite put it that way.

THEO: what's happening here could be looked on as autobiography.

MARINA: Really.

THEO: What we're observing here is the warring elements of my soul as they battle out issues vital to creative existence.

MARINA: I'm not sure I understand.

THEO: Of course none of this is happening in real time. You knew that didn't you?

MARINA: Umm. I can't say...

THEO: The time I'm speaking of licks at you with a thousand little tongues. It distends like a feasting belly, contracts like a sharp pain. It's living, rueful cruel and eminently delicious.

BEA: Yes! You're so perceptive. *[Runs her hand over THEO's.]*

MARINA: I don't think of time as being any of those things. *[Pulls her mother's hand off THEO.]* All I know is I'm sitting in the sunshine, sipping my wine, moving from one lazy moment to the next.

THEO: But that's not what's happening at all. What we have here are moments, yes, a whole collection of them, but some will flicker briefly and go out like snuffed hopes. Others with balloon and distend and *burst* with a stench.

BEA: Oh God! It's so true!

MARINA: Time to go in now, Mother. *[Rises and moves off pulling BEA with her.]*

THEO: Look, all I'm saying is this is not real life at all. It's an imaginary event pulled from my memory. Everything is patterning itself to this event. The flowers, answering to my whim, rush into bloom.

BEA: How could they help themselves!

MARINA: *[Pulling her off.]* You're supposed to phone Father, remember?

THEO: Where are you going? It won't do you any good. You're here for the duration. Exit by *deus ex machina* only! Damn! I resent this. She's supposed to be crazy about me! Why isn't she? Delphine! DELPHINE!

[THEO exits.]

[MARINA comes onto the patio outside her bedroom with her book followed by BEA, dressed in a wrap of an old-fashioned, Edwardian cut.]

BEA: All I'm saying is you could have been a little nicer.

MARINA: Let's just drop it, Mother.

BEA: Fine with me. *[Flounces about a bit, sulking, while MARINA reads her book.]* How's the book?

MARINA: Fascinating. Gives a wonderful feeling of what it was like here all those years ago. And the writer, her name is Lina, in a way she reminds me of you.

BEA: In what way?

MARINA: It's the tone - very *fin de siecle*- up tight but straining to break loose. Listen. Here's her description of the boat crossing from Kavalla. "About the coach to Kavala from Salonika I will say nothing."

[As she reads BEA takes over the lines. Lights dim and change hue to a blue cast.]

MARINA: "The boat wasn't much better. Smelly old tub..."

BEA: smelly old tub. The captain was civil enough and actually had a little English. The crew were a fine lot of ruffians, but they seemed to sense I was a lady and kept a nice distance.

[As she speaks ORPHEUS comes on in the role of Lina's host. It is he she is talking to. He pours her some wine and she drinks.]

BEA: I spent the afternoon on deck. The weather was clear with a brisk wind. It was easy sailing and some of the men, lacking employment, set to dancing.

ORPHEUS: A Greek needs no excuse to dance.

BEA: It was scarcely a dance at all, just a slight motion with the hips and shuffling of feet. Then it became more heated. And their bodies.... Edward wanted me to come below.

ORPHEUS: You were on the ship all night?

BEA: Yes. In the evening we sat out and watched the sunset. But far more beautiful was the rising moon. It rose like a pearl from the sea. The moon seems so much more important here.

ORPHEUS: Let me fill your glass, Lina.

BEA: Edward would object.

ORPHEUS: Edward isn't here.

BEA: No. Edward is digging up his everlasting antiquities. Look at him down there, crawling about on the stones like a beetle.

ORPHEUS: You don't like antiquities?

BEA: It's Edward who doesn't like them.

ORPHEUS: When it's his vocation to dig them up?

BEA: Yes. That's my husband's vocation - to unearth objects and to study cultures that are repulsive to him. Odd isn't it? Everywhere we go it's the same. Just as I'm beginning to get interested in what he's doing, he make me come away for fear it might corrupt me. At first I thought it was subject matter. You know. *Statues*.

ORPHEUS: No I don't. *[Smiles and urges more wine upon her.]*

BEA: Yes you do. I can understand statues, or anything *au naturel*. But in Paris, Edward was upset by *everything*. Clothes. Food. Conversation. Paintings. Even furniture.

ORPHEUS: He found the furniture upsetting?

BEA: It was lovely furniture. Swirling, slender forms, labyrinthine and intricate. I didn't know wood could bend that way. It made me feel liberated, like a bird set free from its cage. [*She whirls about a little drunkenly*] There was one chair in particular he wouldn't let me sit in. I'm sure he was right, too. That chair would have wrapped it's arms about me, twined them all about me and... [*Looks down on Edward*] Do you understand what I'm saying?

ORPHEUS: Your husband was afraid the furniture would seduce you.

BEA: He was jealous of the very names. *L'armoire. Chaise longue*. Poor Edward. He wants to impose limits on every aspect of my life. He doesn't even want me to dream. Poor little beetle Edward. I wonder what he's unearthing down there.

ORPHEUS: Edward has uncovered the Gate of the Protector, the entranceway dedicated to the patron god of the city. Zeus or Heracles or Poseidon. Someone heroic, I expect.

BEA: No, no. A place like this needs a different kind of god. Mysterious...alluring...a god who scorns boundaries.

ORPHEUS: It sounds as if you know him.

BEA: I need such a god. With such a god I could see my own possibilities, my passions, my desires, my longings, my nakedness. [*Suddenly self conscious she moves away from ORPHEUS. The lights return to normal. She is BEA again talking to her daughter.*] I don't think she's like me at all. That sort of man never did appeal to me. Too dark and oily. The gate she wrote about, who was it dedicated to?

MARINA: Dionysos. The hotel clerk said the wall and gate are still there. There were originally friezes with Bacchic rites carved on them but they went missing soon after the excavation. No one knows what happened to them.

BEA: Perhaps the book gives a clue.

MARINA: I'll read on if you like.

BEA: Maybe later. I'm going to go for a walk. I want to have a look at that gate.

[*THEO enters and smiles as Marina who scowls and goes back into the hotel with her book.*]

THEO: Delphine! Delphine!

DELPHINE: What is it?

THEO: What's going on here? I wake up and my body is not the body I expected. My words are coming out distorted. And where are the maenads!

DELPHINE: We're doing the story of Ariadne, remember?

THEO: It shouldn't matter what part of my life we're focussing on — there should be women!
Women always accompany me. Women engaging in the wildness of the primordial!
Women breaking loose from fixed positions into the churning tumultuous essence of life!

DELPHINE: I see what you mean about your words.

THEO: Will you pay attention!

DELPHINE: You're the one who should pay attention. We're focussing on a particular idyllic moment of your life. There was only one woman of any importance in that episode. Or don't you remember.

THEO: Of course I remember. How could I forget her? She was a little witch. And decadent. Her whole family was decadent as hell. Her mother. Well, let's not go into that. Where are you going? Come back here! *[DELPHINE exits.]* Who's in charge here, anyway?

[PELEUS walks by with beach chair.]

PELEUS: It is always doubtful as to who is in command, the dreamer or the dream.

THEO: Did I ask you? *[PELEUS puzzled, exits]* Ariadne. Yes. I remember her, a sexy little piece, one of those nut brown girls Crete was famous for, dark athletic, but creamy as hell. I remember she...

[MARINA dances on the patio.]

ORPHEUS: *[As DEIANEIROs, he comments while MARINA dances. She seems to hear what he is saying but inside her head.]* Marina has been overcome lately with an urge to dance. These petals now, on the damp patio, fallen from the bushes, shocking red in the gloom, she feels the urge to move slowly among them crushing them with her feet, ceremoniously weaving patterns. Her dream of dancing is a secret joy. It comes from blood knowledge, strange notion, dreams.

[MARINA turns to him.]

ORPHEUS: *[He takes her hand and leads her while he speaks.]* The world came into being by a dance. It is the life force, destructive and creative, a way of navigating the terrors of the soul.

MARINA: Yes. That's exactly it.

ORPHEUS: The dance circles into the core, into the meaning of things. It flirts a moment with death and then skips outward again, from darkness to light.

MARINA: How do you know this?

ORPHEUS: I learned it in India, a long time ago. Oh, those women of India.

MARINA: Were they very beautiful?

ORPHEUS: I could have eaten them. They came so close I could feel the pulsing of their blood. Their gowns were like spun sugar and their little feet slipped in and out like smoke. It was a beautiful time. As diaphanous as a dream. Something that slipped by, like a fragrance that couldn't be captured. Where are you going? Stay with me.

MARINA: I must go.

ORPHEUS: You want to stay. I can tell. I can feel your wrist throb.

MARINA: No!

ORPHEUS: Running from what you fear is not the way. You must dance toward the terror.

MARINA: *[Pulls hand away sharply.]* I think I hear my mother.

[ORPHEUS smiles and drifts off.]

[BEA comes out laughing at someone within, raises her glass to him saucily.]

BEA: You're centaurs, every one of you. Ravagers!

MARINA: What's got into you, Mother?

BEA: Just kicking up my heels a little.

MARINA: With every man in the hotel? You're behaving like a...

BEA: Like a what? And what about you and that Deianeiros man? I saw you out here, mooning all over him.

MARINA: There's something compelling about him.

BEA: Ugh! You can see the horns sprouting.

MARINA: Honestly, Mother. You're on at me all the time about meeting men. Then when I finally show an interest in someone...

BEA: Someone your own age is what I meant. What's wrong with all those young men on the beach.

MARINA: I'm not going to get involved with him. I only said he looked interesting.

BEA: Compelling, is what you said.

MARINA: We were just standing together.

BEA: In the moonlight.

MARINA: To tell you the truth, I'm not sure how I feel about him. Everything's so mixed up here. The most extraordinary things seem perfectly normal and *[She plucks a flower and turns it round in her hand.]* the everyday things seem impossibly complex and mysterious.

BEA: It's something in the wine. *[Lowering her voice.]* They put blood in it.

MARINA: I don't think so, Mother.

BEA: They do. I haven't been myself since I started drinking it. This afternoon, for instance, something really strange happened. While you were reading I went for a walk. There was an animal in the field, a huge rampaging beast with a silky white hide and pink steaming nostrils. When it saw me it came right up to the fence and started pawing the ground and bellowing. If the fence hadn't been there I feel sure it would have...

MARINA: Bulls can be dangerous.

BEA: Oh, that's not what I mean. I...what I'm trying to say is, I felt... I felt...

MARINA: Yes?

BEA: *[Lays hand confidentially on MARINA's arm]* Drawn to it.

MARINA: Drawn to a bull? *[Pulls away, alarmed]*

BEA: Sh! It's the wine. I'm sure it's the wine. I'm going to complain.

MARINA: Just go to bed.

BEA: My whole personality is disintegrating. Forty years of barriers and they've all fallen away with one sip of wine.

MARINA: One?

BEA: Layer after layer peeling off.

MARINA: Like a cabbage?

BEA: *[Sulky]* Not a cabbage. A cabbage is a cabbage right to the core. I'm something different with every layer. Which layer is me I'm not at all sure...

MARINA: You should lie down, Mother.

[They move off. DELPHINE enters pushing the cow. THEO follows her, complaining.]

THEO: I thought the girl was supposed to fall in love with me!

DELPHINE: She becomes your wife. I don't know if it was ever exactly recorded that she loved you. Give me a hand with this.

THEO: She didn't love me? Then why are we doing this? *[DELPHINE fusses with the cow.]*
She never loved me?

DELPHINE: She might have. Maybe she loved...certain aspects.

THEO: There something about you...I just can't....did I love her?

DELPHINE: How should I know?

THEO: I did love her. I'm sure of it. She was my nut brown girl. I made a goddess of her, didn't I?

DELPHINE: Come on. They'll be needing this soon.

THEO: Why won't you talk to me?

[DELPHINE exits pushing the cow. THEO follows her.]

[MARINA and Bea are on the patio outside their room. BEA seems unwell.]

MARINA: You're burning up. Would you like a damp cloth?

BEA: Read some of your book to me.

[MARINA reads. Quality of light changes, taking on a blue cast.]

MARINA: Something is definitely up. The island is...

BEA: The island is receding into dream time. This evening the light over the harbour was like pink opals. Everyone in the town was out for promenade. You could hardly move, it was so crowded. I almost felt like one of them. I wished I had a child, a son to follow about with a dinner plate, stuffing food by hand into his mouth whenever he stops a minute. That's what the women do here. But no. I can never be like that. If I've learned anything here it's that I can never be suppliant. Edward will be so disappointed. But then I am disappointed in Edward.

ORPHEUS: *[Who enters while she is reading]* In what regard?

BEA: In regard to the excavations.

[ORPHEUS smiles]

BEA: Smile if you like, but I don't find it funny at all. All week I've been hearing about these marvelous friezes he's unearthing and now that they are finally in view, I'm forbidden to see them. Have you seen them?

ORPHEUS: Yes.

BEA: What are they like? I understand they have special significance for women.

ORPHEUS: The women of the island are excited by the find. They leave offerings of flowers. They dance on the hillsides. It is rumoured that they plan to gather tonight at the excavation site.

BEA: And their husbands don't object?

ORPHEUS: They do. A movement is underway to have the friezes destroyed. Edward is their leader.

BEA: Edward is planning to destroy the friezes? I must see them. Will you take me?

ORPHEUS: Now?

BEA: What better time? The moon is full.

ORPHEUS: And Edward?

BEA: Edward married such a little bit of me. There's so much he hasn't yet uncovered. Who was that sea goddess who changed shape every time a man touched her? That's who I am. If I became all that I wanted to be my husband would fall apart. Little cracks would appear all over his surface and the pieces would fall in a heap.

ORPHEUS: And what are all these things you want to be?

BEA: When I'm dancing, as my feet slip about, I see right into myself. I see a woman who needs to dare everything, who needs to be unafraid of passion. A woman who ...

[Suddenly panicking BEA stumbles and the light returns to normal.]

MARINA: Are you all right?

BEA: Why do you read that trash?

MARINA: You asked me to read it to you.

BEA: It's dangerous.

MARINA: It's just a book.

BEA: You fill your head with that kind of fantasy, then you find some man to impose it on. Real life never comes into it.

MARINA: You should lie down.

BEA: I'm going to. *[Exits]*

[Spot on DELPHINE at another level. She wears or holds up a MOON MASK.]

DELPHINE: I want to talk now about the juxtaposition of things. This flower, this little fragment of nature, red petalled against the stone. A drop of blood on snowy cloth. A prince who branches into sacred oak. A king who prunes him.

Haephestus robs the ground and makes of dull metal a branch as delicate as air. If you can put a wreath of metal leaves in real hair then why not anything with anything? A snake entwining and savouring a flower. A maiden holding up a roof. A woman with a bull.

Bea is dreaming now, a dream as full of illusion and dementia as any real-life scene. She breaks through the long held barriers, unleashes things she cannot control.

[Sound and motion.]

DELPHINE: She dreams lavishly. A couch strewn with gowns, a chest of exotic silks, a large vase twined round with octopods, the labrys, all these indicate we are in the royal boudoir.

BEA: Ariadne! *[Picks up a gowns and drops it again]* Ariadne!

DELPHINE: Queen Pasiphae, a regal, imposing figure is taking up and discarding gowns. She spots her daughter, Ariadne.

BEA: There you are. Help me with this. *[Holds up a necklace]*

[MARINA/ARIADNE steps forward and start to clasp the necklace around Bea's neck. DELPHINE moves off.]

BEA: Where is that man? He should be here by now.

MARINA: Who?

BEA: Uhhh. Your hands are cold. You're always so cold. You have no passion in you. Too much thinking, girl. It saps the body... *[Roaring sound off]* Ariadne. Listen to that.

MARINA: Sounds like an animal.

BEA: Yes. *[Smiles and preens in the mirror]* Yes it does. Here, help me with these trinkets.

MARINA: How wonderful. They're shaped like little bees. *[She undoes the clasp and tries to attach it to Pasiphae's ear]*

BEA: Your father gave me them. Stepped out of his bureaucratic sandals for once in his life. I surrender up my bee-stung heart, he said. Hypocrite. He doesn't even recognize the bee. Here, let me! You're useless. *[Grabs away the earring and attaches it herself]* Where is the wretch!

MARINA: Father?

BEA: Daedalus, you fool. *[Pulls a silk robe from the chest and wraps it round her]*

[DELPHINE/AS SERVANT enters.]

BEA: What kept you?

DELPHINE: I had trouble finding him. He's an elusive one, that Daedi. He's on his way.

BEA: He promised me a device. He promised... *[Beastly roar distracts her]* How am I to contain this passion!

DELPHINE: He's got something.

BEA: What does it look like?

DELPHINE: He has it cloaked.

BEA: Maddening! *[Snort off. Bea looks out window.]* Listen to him! He's as impatient as I am. *[A louder roar. She squeals like a teenager at a rock idol]* He sees me! I don't believe it. He sees me!. I think I'm going to die!

MARINA: Come away from the window. No need to show the world your folly.

BEA: And if the world sees? The folly of a queen has its own splendour.

MARINA: Even a queen can go too far.

BEA: A queen can never go too far. The boundaries would redefine themselves as she neared them *[Shoves dress at MARINA.]* This isn't right. Get me the brocade. And heat me some wine, you know the way I like it, with herbs and honey. Go with her.

[DELPHINE and MARINA exit.]

[Flourish as PELEUS/DAEDI enters. He has a cow hide under his arm and he pulls a huge cloaked object.]

BEA: It's about time! What have you got for me? Let me see!

PELEUS: Perhaps you should wait. Think it over.

BEA: Wicked man! Tease me, but tell me! Show me!

[PELEUS pull off the cloak. It is a wooden structure slightly reminiscent of a cow, with open fretwork. On the head is a crown with real cow horns. BEA looks at it, speechless.]

PELEUS: Well?

BEA: *[Wanders round to the back of the object and looks speculatively.]* Hmmm. Yes. *[She's a bit non-committal.]* I see.

PELEUS: Do you? *[Drapes the red cow hide over the frame.]*

BEA: *[Fingers the hide.]* The red cow?

PELEUS: You said she was his favourite.

BEA: *[Sulking, she wraps the hide around her.]* A dreary little beast. I don't know what he saw in her. *[Puts on the crown from the cow and finger the horns.]* The moon on her back in a silvery gown, longs for the....

PELEUS: Not quite like that.

BEA: How then?

PELEUS: *[Lifts up a trap at the top.]* You get in here. Your legs will go in here — one here, one there. You will put your feet here and here and lie along here — so. We drape the skin around — so. And to complete the illusion...*[He places the horns back on the head.]*

BEA: You think this will work?

PELEUS: I know it will.

BEA: You've tried it? *[He says nothing. BEA looks a long time without speaking. The beast roaring without distracts her.]* Look at him out there pacing the field. I want to feel that muscle rippling along the flank, the wetness of his snout. I want to feel that milky breath on my skin.

PELEUS: I see the fire has not diminished.

BEA: The fire has not diminished, Artificer. I still want and want.

PELEUS: The animal is sacred to the sea. You risk displeasing Poseidon.

BEA: Are not white bulls sacred to the moon?

PELEUS: The sea was boiling today, purple with rage.

BEA: Is not the moon above the sea? *[Looking out.]* He's definitely sacred to someone. It is more than those silken flanks that compel me.

PELEUS: They say that Zeus came to Europa thus.

BEA: Zeus! That superficial ninny! I'm not talking of Zeus! *[PELEUS makes a gesture of propitiation.]* Go ahead if you must. Genuflect. Make your gestures of self-deprecation. You think I fear Zeus? I have the moon in my hands, the double axe at my command. Let that jock idiot storm around as he pleases! No, that beast is neither from Zeus nor from Poseidon. It's from another power, a greater intelligence, some mysterious and compelling essence.

PELEUS: Perhaps a madness has been sent upon you.

BEA: You dare!

PELEUS: A holy mania of course. I'm only saying that no one else sees anything but the animal, a carcass filled with meat to be cut down for the God and the twelfth part burned in his honour. No one else sees this mysterious essence, as you call it.

BEA: Enough! Just tell me when!

PELEUS: Tonight?

[She kisses him joyfully. He responds. She pushes him away.]

BEA: If it works...Maybe... Meanwhile, remember you're a slave, nothing more. Help me into this thing.

[PELEUS helps her step into the cow, and fastens the straps at her ankles and wrists.]

BEA: I don't know about the shackles, Daedi.

PELEUS: He is a creature of great strength.

BEA: Oh God!

PELEUS: Come forward. *[He drapes the robe over the structure, pushes it round so we can see BEA's face. Then places the horns on her head.]*

BEA: Listen! He's close at hand. Retire from our presence. Go, I tell you. Go!

[PELEUS moves off and meets MARINA who tries to see her mother. Faint sound of bull roarers gradually increasing in volume from now to end of scene.]

MARINA: Pasiphae! What have you done with her?

PELEUS: Leave her. It's by her own choice

MARINA: Let me go! That sound! It's so menacing.

[DELPHINE comes out at another level.]

DELPHINE: To the girl the sorcerer. To the woman, the beast. And to the crone, what remains.

[THEO enters, looking confused.]

THEO: What's all the racket? That old woman there. Don't I know her?

MARINA: That's Delphine, my mother's woman.

THEO: I knew her somewhere else. An island shore. A departing ship.

MARINA: I don't know what you mean.

THEO: I can't quite place her.

MARINA: She's very old

THEO: It must have been another. Someone long ago.

[They move off. The lights dim. The bull roarer sounds. The shadow of a huge bull head is thrown on the wall.]

BEA: Listen to that! It melts me. What power!

[Swirling chaos of sound and light. The roar is much closer now.]

BEA: On the other hand....It does sound big. Daedi! Daedi! Come back here. I want to give this some thought. I want to discuss this. Daedi! You wretch! Come when I command you!

[Chaos and screams.]

ACT TWO

[The garden of the palace. In the background is the mangled shape of the false cow. Sound of hubbub and unrest. Strange music.]

MARINA dances alone, absorbed with her movements.

DELPHINE enters on an upper level and puts on MOON MASK.]

DELPHINE: The dream continues. Chaos and corruption mark the reign of Pasiphae. The white bull ravages the countryside. The mother rages, the daughter turns inward to the dance, seeking the centre of things. But the serpent approaches, seeking out the sweet virgin meat.

[ORPHEUS/THESEUS enters hurriedly, looking behind him. Sounds of riot, angry voices, running feet. He crouches behind a bush, where he is spotted by MARINA.]

MARINA: You're trespassing. This is my private dancing area.

ORPHEUS: The floor seems to be inlaid with something.

MARINA: Copper and mother of pearl. Daedalus created it for me.

ORPHEUS: It makes a pattern. A maze.

MARINA: It's the pattern of my dance. It helps me concentrate. But you shouldn't really be looking at it. And you can't stay here.

ORPHEUS: Because it might enrage the Queen?

MARINA: You're one of those Greeks my father brought back.

ORPHEUS: Yes.

MARINA: One of the athletes.

ORPHEUS: Athens' finest. *[Flexes his muscles.]*

MARINA: *[Moving away.]* You're right about the queen. She wouldn't like to find you here. Especially now. Every little thing puts her in a raging temper.

[BEA/PASIPHAE appears at a higher level, angry, raging and very, very pregnant.]

BEA: I will not put up with this, do you hear? Someone must pay!

ORPHEUS: She's looking for a scapegoat.

[DELPHINE comes on carrying a double axe. She spots ORPHEUS and points a dramatic, accusing finger at him.]

DELPHINE: Pharmacos!

MARINA: It doesn't look too good for you. *[Seizes another double axe from its stand.]*

DELPHINE: Pharmacos!

BEA: *[Spotting him.]* Seize that man! Guards! *[MARINA and DELPHINE hold him prisoner with the axes.]* The pharmacos has been chosen. The disorder in the kingdom will be set right.

ORPHEUS: The others I can understand. But you? Don't you know you will suffer my loss the most?

[MARINA is affected by his words.]

ORPHEUS: You will seek me in vain in the dark spirals of your dreaming.

BEA: You can stop that kind of talk. Daedalus!

MARINA: Let's hear what he has to say mother.

BEA: Nothing he can say will make a difference.

[PELEUS/DAEDALUS enters with tools.]

BEA: Shackle this man. Come! We must make plans.

[BEA exits, followed by DELPHINE. MARINA follows but, her attention still on ORPHEUS, lingers in the background.]

PELEUS chains ORPHEUS' feet.]

PELEUS: Some woman, eh? I'd like to grapple with her at my leisure.

ORPHEUS: Your fantasies might be a little different if you were in my predicament.

PELEUS: I don't know. There's a certain sexual excitement to being the victim. Being torn apart can be a sensual experience. All those female hands laid on you, each grabbing their little bit.

[MARINA dances in the background, aware of ORPHEUS.]

ORPHEUS: Why my butt and not yours. You're the one responsible for the Queen's delicate condition. You made the beast available to her.

PELEUS: She did try to put the blame on me.

ORPHEUS: But you wriggled out.

PELEUS: I keep my wits about me.

ORPHEUS: You could help me out with those wits of yours. I've been told there's an obstacle course.

PELEUS: Ah! A wicked piece of construction. I built it.

ORPHEUS: A passage with something nasty at the centre.

PELEUS: We named it labyrinth for the double axe. As a method of execution not as direct as the labrys but just as deadly.

ORPHEUS: You might have a map I could use to find my way through.

PELEUS: No map, I'm afraid. I can advise you however.

ORPHEUS: Yes?

PELEUS: *[Hold up a conch shell.]* Tell me. How would you pass a thread through this?

ORPHEUS: Impossible. It curls and twist too much A thread would never go through it.

PELEUS: On the contrary. All you need is an ant. You smear a little honey on the small end of the shell. You attach a gossamer fine thread to the ant and place it at the large end, so. *[PELEUS demonstrates while he talks.]* The ant will find its way through the intricate maze of the shell to the honey, pulling the thread behind it. What you must do is find yourself an ant.

ORPHEUS: An ant. I don't get it.

[Behind them MARINA moves about her dancing floor.]

PELEUS: What you must do, man, is find yourself an ant to guide you through the impossible spirals of this situation.

[He looks up toward MARINA. ORPHEUS looks thoughtful.]

PELEUS: Yes. Attach your thread to Ariadne. *[Exits.]*

ORPHEUS: *[Moves to MARINA.]* How like a bee is my beloved.

MARINA: A poet. I thought you were an athlete.

ORPHEUS: I prefer mental jousting. How like a bee is my beloved. All dusty with the pollen of love. *[Takes her hand and draws her close.]* Golden as a dream and sweetly cruel.

MARINA: Shouldn't you be composing yourself? Coming to terms with your fate?

ORPHEUS: I'd rather stay here and watch you dance.

[The light mellows about them and attentions shifts to DELPHINE followed by THEO.]

THEO: Slow down a minute I want to talk to you. *[She stops reluctantly.]* Nothing's going the way I intended, Delphine. I never had this kind of trouble before. It used to be enough to summon you. You were only too ready to engage in the sacred frenzy. Is that no longer important to you? Am I no longer important. You once saw me as a god. Now it appears you see only a man.

DELPHINE: You are neither god nor man, Theo. You're the muse.

THEO: I was master of your labyrinthine souls. You clung to me. You were obsessed with me.

DELPHINE: But we hunted you too, and in the mazy centre cut you down to flower again.

THEO: Women just aren't the same any more. What happened to them all? Rhea and Cybele. Thetis. Thetis, breasts bound about with pearls. *[Looks over at MARINA.]* And Ariadne. My beloved girl. She isn't right, is she?

DELPHINE: Who?

THEO: That girl there. Nothing like the real Ariadne.

DELPHINE: And what was the *real* Ariadne like?

THEO: Darker, leaner. Tougher. The first time we met, we wrestled.

DELPHINE: You fell on the grass, the sun hot on your bodies.

THEO: How did you know that? Who are you?

DELPHINE: I thought I was Delphine.

THEO: No. You're ...I know you....

[MARINA laughs.]

THEO: Look at that! I never understood how she could fall for him.

DELPHINE: She was very young. Easily dazzled. He seemed to understand her.

THEO: He understood where her chances lay. He used her and abandoned her. He abandoned all that joy and complexity.

DELPHINE: Heroes don't like complexity in their women. Araidne was rejected for the very things that made her useful.

THEO: Was there any aspect of her I rejected.

DELPHINE: *[Fondly.]* No. You grappled with her in all her changes. Remember that song we used to sing? *[He shakes his head. She sings a line]* I'll be the flame of consuming desire.

THEO: Yes! *[Sings]* I'll be the spring that quenches your fire.

DELPHINE: I'll be the salmon that slips through your stream.

THEO: I'll be the otter that snaps through your dream.

And I'll carry you off to my leaf lined lair
And lay you down and unloose your hair.
And you'll shine like the moon in my bed.
You'll shine like the moon in my bed.

[They continue singing softly but once again THEO is distracted by MARINA and DELPHINE slips away.]

ORPHEUS: You know the maze.

MARINA: All the women know it.

ORPHEUS: Then help me. Initiate me into this feminine intricacy of yours. Help me through this vicious tangle.

MARINA: I'll do what I can. *[Exits as PELEUS enters.]*

ORPHEUS: Goodbye my little emmet.

PELEUS: Any luck

ORPHEUS: I think I've found myself an ant.

PELEUS: Good. Well done! *[Takes up shackles and leads ORPHEUS out.]*

THEO: *[Picking up the song.]* And you'll shine like the moon in my bed. You'll shine like the moon in my bed. *[He notices DELPHINE is gone and exits.]*

[DELPHINE, BEA, and MARINA return as the porch of the Caryatids, dancing slowly with soft sculpture Capitals on their heads. ORPHEUS/CAMERAMAN enters and begins taking pictures.]

MARINA: Are we still in the dream?

DELPHINE: Shh!

MARINA: I just wanted to know.

BEA: At this point, does it matter?

MARINA: Look, he's taking our picture.

BEA: So?

MARINA: I like having my picture taken.

BEA: *[Sings]* You have too concave a notion of your part in things.

But I know what you mean.

There was a time when I wanted to be the painting.

I wanted to be all those women, the odalisque, the ballerina, the Maja, naked or clothed,
legs spread, legs clasped.

All those figments of the male imagination.

All those figments of the male imagination.

Dejeuner sur l'herbe, that sensuous overflowing flesh parked next to all those lovely,
uptight, introverted men sitting fully dressed. That's what I wanted to be.

[Shifts in a sensuous way at the thought.]

ORPHEUS: Keep still!

BEA: I also liked the idea of being fully dressed
in a field where the men are naked.

Lean, well hung,

lounging about among the daisies

and me tightly buttoned in their midst

until all their little peckers seize up with the idea
of the flesh behind the buttons,

bursting into flower.

ORPHEUS: Keep still!

BEA: Excuse me!

ORPHEUS: How do you expect me to do this if you don't keep still?

BEA: What's in it for me?

ORPHEUS: Immortality.

BEA: Big deal!

ORPHEUS: What more could you want? I don't get much more out of it myself. And I'm taking
all the risks.

BEA: *[Stepping down from the plinth.]* Risks! Since I moved in you've been getting sustenance, cheap labour, sex, home cooking and should we mention the opportunity for exploitation and cruelty?

ORPHEUS: *[Sulky.]* The artist has the right to everything he can imagine. If I can imagine it, I can have it.

BEA: And I get nothing?

ORPHEUS: So why don't you think of something? You're a free agent. *[Shifts over to taking snaps of MARINA.]*

BEA: Wait! I didn't mean it.

ORPHEUS: It's all right. My imaginative flame has settled on another object.

BEA: They're all the same. They all want the sylphlike tender young things they can work their fantasies on. They drop anyone who gives them an argument or makes them think. Don't you see that you've lost something?

ORPHEUS: I've found something. Something that can be moulded into interesting forms.

BEA: It's grappling with the materials that makes an artist interesting, not these no-contest relationships you go for.

MARINA: I like being focused on. It's a delicious feeling and yet impersonal. Like being a flower or a tree.

BEA: He painted me as a tree for six months.

ORPHEUS: The tree as metaphor for women clearly demonstrates the rooted, subjective character of their nature.

BEA: His brush dabbled wickedly, lingering on the bits he was interested in.

ORPHEUS: The myth of Daphne symbolizes a woman's escape from sex.

BEA: Or her imprisonment by it. I writhed under his torturous brush and afterwards everyone exclaimed, "How pure! How innocent! How extremely knowing!"

MARINA: So he was right, he did immortalize you.

BEA: He was an arrogant son of a bitch!

MARINA: I'd love to know a man who understood women so well.

BEA: You'd just be a receptacle, a vehicle for his ambitions.

MARINA: At least he'd put me on a pedestal.

BEA: Yes he would, but Lord help you if you ever got down. You saw what happened to me.

MARINA: Perhaps you didn't have the right attitude. It would be different for me.

BEA: Different! You poor worm. Everything will be just fine as long as he can get on with painting you as a tree. But suppose one day you decide to become a mouse, or a cloud. How do you think he'd take that?

MARINA: I'm sure he'd understand.

BEA: Tell him about this morning then.

MARINA: No I can't. It's too... sylvan.

ORPHEUS: I adore the sylvan aspect of women. I'll take your portrait in a tangled garden.

MARINA: You see he does understand. I was combing my hair today in front of the mirror.

ORPHEUS: A cascade of hair. A transcendent image.

MARINA: I'd been brushing for two or three minutes when suddenly my breasts burst into flower.

ORPHEUS: [*Suddenly wary.*] What did you say?

MARINA: They just blossomed before my eyes. First there was a yellow and black pansy in each centre.

ORPHEUS: Waspish combination.

MARINA: Then roses, bright scarlet and tea-rose pink, and then lilies and forget-me-nots and tulips. Then I felt a strange sensation in my loins.

ORPHEUS: Keep still!

MARINA: And I looked down and I was sprouting there too—baby's breath and violets and peppery carnations. Where are you going?

ORPHEUS: [*Packing his camera away.*] Something's come up. Some ruins on the other side of the island I have to photograph. They say there are statues there of nymphs that the ivy has overgrown.

MARINA: But what about me?

ORPHEUS: Sprouting, flowering, budding, overblooming. All I want is a woman who'll keep still! Is that too much to ask?

BEA: What did I tell you?

*[ORPHEUS exits in a rage. Followed by MARINA and BEA.
PELEUS enters dressed as EDWARD.]*

PELEUS: What's wrong with him?

DELPHINE: *[Removing caryatid headpiece.]* He surprised a woman shedding her figments.

PELEUS: *[Picks up LINA's shawl which is draped over a branch.]* My wife's having trouble in that respect. *[Studies shawl.]*

[MARINA comes out reading her book. As she reads ORPHEUS and BEA saunter on. A blue light indicates the fantasy.]

MARINA: I returned to the villa in a state of high excitement. The moon was seductively bright, my companion dangerously close.

ORPHEUS: How did you like the friezes?

BEA: they were wonderful. Wonderful! I've never seen such dancers. I couldn't believe they were only marble. I always imagined marble was cold. But this was warm, rosy, more fleshlike than flesh.

[PELEUS hurries up to them.]

PELEUS: Lina! Where in God's name have you been?

BEA: We've been to see the friezes. Oh Edward they were wonderful!

PELEUS: You went against my wishes? My orders? And in your night clothes!

BEA: Don't be so stuffy, Edward.

PELEUS: *[Wrapping her shawl about her.]* Really, Lina, I won't have this!

BEA: I want to dance, Edward. *[Pulling at his arm.]* Weaving and twisting inward, tempting the danger.

PELEUS: You must stop this babbling. You're overexcited.

BEA: I've been in the present of power, Edward.

PELEUS: Come to bed now.

BEA: I'm not sleepy.

PELEUS: I command you to come to bed.

BEA: Command me? There are more effective ways to get me to your bed, Edward. *[She strokes his face, he grabs her wrist and forces her toward the bedroom. ORPHEUS smiles.]*

PELEUS: He's the one who did this to you. Don't you recognise the danger? You swoon over him when you should be terrified.

BEA: He overpowers me, Edward.

PELEUS: He's filling your head with nonsense

BEA: He fills me with ideas that are frightening, and elusive and desirable.

PELEUS: I just don't understand this hold he has on you.

BEA: It's your doing. You unearthed the gate of the Protector. You unearthed his maenads in full bacchic frenzy.

PELEUS: I'm not talking about the god.

BEA: I am. I am his acolyte, Edward, his devoted follower.

PELEUS: You're drunk. Come! *[Grabs her again.]*

BEA: It won't do any good Edward. I shall simply run off again.

PELEUS: Not if I lock you in.

BEA: He will release me. You should join him, Edward, not resist him.

PELEUS: I shall always resist him. He is evil, corrupt and I curse his name.

ORPHEUS: Come, sir, you are overwrought. Take some wine. *[Offers him a glass.]*

PELEUS: A curse on your wine, too. *[Dashes the glass to the floor and immediately cries out.]*

BEA: Edward!

ORPHEUS: Stay.

BEA: But what have you done to him?

ORPHEUS: I've sent him a treat. It's sprouting now in front of him, a huge purple trumpet.

BEA: A flower?

ORPHEUS: A flower that opens like a luscious serpent mouth complete with fangs. The lower lip trembles and a drop forms there, clear, sticky. Without thinking Edward reaches out his tongue and collects it. For a moment there is no sensation at all, then his throat burns and the world tips and swirls.

PELEUS: *[Staggers and clutches at his throat.]* Everything is turning. Oh God! I can't close my eyes!

BEA: *[Draws him to couch.]* Just lie there and rest.

PELEUS: Look! Dragon shapes blooming like flowers on the walls. And those birds flapping about. They're all talking too much. Whispering obscenities. Saying things.

BEA: Lie still. *[She tries to calm him but he shrinks back in terror.]*

PELEUS: Look at the witch! Open to the waist again! You'd think she'd know better. Look, 13 breasts, each rounded nipple more desirable than the last. Alabaster breasts.

BEA: Hush, Edward, it's only me.

[DELPHINE enters with tea tray.]

PELEUS: And that crone! She knows something, staring at me like that. She's gone mad because of men like me.

BEA: It's Delphine with the tea.

PELEUS: Such a perfect little crone, isn't she? Such a complete little stage hag. Look how she plays it to the hilt. Lips deliberately whiskery. Scarf firmly tied to the shape of her head — no frivolous tails to flutter in the breeze. *[As he speaks, DELPHINE mumbles and backs off a little.]* And those spider-black rags. To the skin, I'll wager. Right to her blistering uncompromising skin. Is your underclothing black, old woman?

ORPHEUS: Pour him some tea.

PELEUS: I feel ill all over.

ORPHEUS: Tea with lemon. Sweeten it with honey. His spirits will improve

[PELEUS sips the tea.]

BEA: Feeling better?

PELEUS: A little.

BEA: Everyone back to their usual number of breasts?

PELEUS: There's no need to be coarse, Lina.

BEA: Drink some more.

PELEUS: And don't think I'm frightened off, either. I will resist to the last. Those friezes will be destroyed. The God routed.

BEA: But why resist? When it's all so simple. All you must do is admit your secret mind, your sexual, complex, sinister mind. *[PELEUS turns from her.]*

ORPHEUS: Let him be. Let him sleep now.

BEA: Why can't he be more understanding of women? Like you, for instance.

ORPHEUS: I know all about women. I *was* a woman for many years. *[Opens his robe, revealing women's undergarments beneath. They exit towards the bedroom.]*

DELPHINE: *[Wearing moon mask.]* Edward is dreaming now. In Edward's dream three women dance—breasts bare, snakes in their grasp. They dance relentlessly circling like birds of prey. Edward moans, feeling in his muscle the heat of the dance, barriers broken down, intimations of the Thirteenth God.

[Transitional music and lights. THEO and ORPHEUS as celebrants move into a ritualistic position around a tree where votive figures hang.]

DELPHINE: Ariadne dreams too. She dreams the several fates that may befall her.

BEA: She hanged herself for love.

ORPHEUS: She died in childbirth.

THEO: She lived in wedded bliss for ever after.

MARINA: I keep having this dream. I keep having it over and over again. It is always the same but it has a different ending each time.

BEA: Obviously the basic question has not yet been resolved.

MARINA: I keep having this dream.

DELPHINE: *[Holding up the mask she was wearing, she passes it to BEA.]* It always begins with the moon.

BEA: A full moon, held by a woman with red, red lips and limbs like marble.

ORPHEUS: Standing in the moonlight is a tree.

THEO: This is a special tree, it can foretell the future.

ORPHEUS: Beside the tree stands an old woman.

THEO: This is a special old woman. Her ears were once licked by a snake.

BEA: She can understand the language of trees.

DELPHINE: Then Marina comes.

ORPHEUS: She carries in her arms a puppet doll made specially for her by Daedalus.

THEO: A perfect replica of Ariadne.

BEA: Marina attaches the doll to the tree and asks the question.

MARINA: *[Attaches the doll.]* What is to become of me?

DELPHINE: After you lead him through the labyrinth,

BEA: There was your first mistake.

DELPHINE: After you lead him safely through the maze, Theseus will take you with him.

ORPHEUS: You will sail with him in the dark ship. A storm will overtake you

THEO: But you will find safe harbour at an island.

MARINA: Naxos?

DELPHINE: I believe that is the one.

THEO: The ship will stay there till the weather passes and then sail on.

BEA: Without you.

MARINA: But why would he leave me? He loved me.

BEA: You should never have danced for him.

DELPHINE: Some say it was political expediency. Others that he had a wife at home.

MARINA: Perhaps a madness was sent upon him.

DELPHINE: Could be.

MARINA: The mast sprouted vine leaves and the sailors turned to dolphins and abandoned ship.
That's what happened.

DELPHINE: Anything is possible.

MARINA: A cloud of forgetfulness sent by the God.

BEA: Whatever it was, he left without you.

MARINA: I don't believe it. I will never believe it. *[Runs off. Lights swirl and we hear a storm and voices of sailors.]*

DELPHINE: Ariadne dreams again.

ORPHEUS: She comes to the tree bearing a doll fashioned of clay by the great artificer himself.

BEA: She hangs it on the tree and asks the question.

MARINA: *[Attaches the doll.]* What is to become of me?

DELPHINE: You are in great pain.

[Gaspings and moaning sounds like a woman in labour.]

MARINA: I am on the ship.

DELPHINE: You will die in childbirth.

MARINA: On the ship?

DELPHINE: The pitching and rolling of the boat was unbearable to you. Theseus put you ashore and commanded the women of Naxos to care for you.

MARINA: And?

DELPHINE: While seeing to the boat, he was swept out to sea by a storm.

[On another level labour sounds are coming from a figure who lies facing the sky, head to audience, knees bent and apart in a position of labour. We can only barely make out the figure.]

MARINA: Against his will?

DELPHINE: So they say

[Figure moans.]

MARINA: I knew it.

DELPHINE: The women were kind to you. Pitied you. And to cheer you read letters from your beloved.

MARINA: So he did write.

DELPHINE: No. They were imaginary letters, manufactured by the women to console you in your abandonment.

MARINA: How kind of them.

DELPHINE: They did everything they could for you, but you died before you could be delivered.

MARINA: And did Theseus weep for me?

ORPHEUS: Yes. When he returned, so afflicted was he at your loss he ordered sacrifices to be made on your behalf and had two little images, one of silver, one of bronze, placed at your altar.

DELPHINE: Every year now there is a ceremony where they pay homage to your trials. A young man imitates by gesture and voice a woman in labour.

[The groaning and gestures of the figure increases to climax and ends suddenly. We see now that it is a man/PELEUS.]

MARINA: *[Hanging another doll on the tree.]* What is my true fate?

DELPHINE: There are many versions.

BEA: Some say when Theseus left, you hanged yourself.

ORPHEUS: Some say that at Naxos you married a priest of Bacchus and had many children.

THEO: Some even say the God himself married you and made a Goddess of you.

MARINA: In any version do I reunite with Theseus?

DELPHINE: In none is it your fate to grow old together.

BEA: As long as the key to the maze is given up this dream will not resolve itself.

MARINA: I must grow old without him. What is it like to be old?

DELPHINE: How should I know?

MARINA: But you're old.

DELPHINE: It doesn't mean that I know anything. I don't know any more than you do what's coming. What to expect from day to day.

MARINA: Your ears were licked by snakes.

DELPHINE: An old wives' tale.

MARINA: I thought you'd be wise and powerful by now.

DELPHINE: Wisdom. Power. Just feeble dreams to an old woman.

MARINA: But isn't old age the time of restitution, of resolving all the questions? Isn't it the time of moral strength and regeneration?

DELPHINE: Don't count on it.

[MARINA cradling the last doll, turns with a final question.]

MARINA: What's the worst thing?

DELPHINE: The bitterness. Pray not to be bitter.

[MARINA exits.]

THEO: *[Who has been listening to this exchange.]* You make it all sound so cruel and sinister. It was a story with a happy ending.

DELPHINE: It's a story with several endings, most of them dismal.

THEO: Everyone knows that I was the salvation of Ariadne. I comforted her after her lover abandoned her. I married her, had children with her and eventually made a Goddess of her.

DELPHINE: She was a Goddess long before she met you.

THEO: I raised her chaplet to the stars.

DELPHINE: She was in love. You couldn't forgive her for that. You destroyed her.

THEO: What makes you such an expert?

DELPHINE: I thought, by now, you would have guessed.

THEO: I take it you're someone who feels wronged by me. You've done nothing but thwart me and contradict me from the beginning. *[She begins to leave.]* Wait! Answer me! Tell me what I mean to you.

DELPHINE: You are everything and nothing. The sorcerer who must be slain. The bull who must be cut down. At each stage you are something different. At each stage you must be sacrificed for the next to begin.

THEO: At each stage you are in love with me and yet you abandon me.

DELPHINE: Before you abandon me. A woman must be courageous enough to transgress her own boundaries.

THEO: And is this such a consolation to you to have destroyed your favourite dreams. What can you find in me now that life has played this monstrous joke of old age on you?

DELPHINE: I'm not sure. The jester, perhaps?

[THEO throws up his hands and follows her off.]

[There is a change of light and MARINA enters reading from her book. As she reads BEA/LINA appears, dishevelled, mad, bloodstained, unrepentant. She has done an evil deed and exults in it. There seem to be other women there, just off. She clasps a bloodstained bundle in her arms.]

MARINA: *[Reading.]* Edward forbade me to leave the house. He locked me in my room, not understanding.....

BEA: He locked me in my room, not understanding that neither lock nor key could stand between me and the God.

[She holds the bloody bundle aloft and talks to it.]

BEA: How beautiful we were. Did you see how beautiful? How strong? We went to the Gate of the Protector to dance before the sacred friezes, to reincarnate those marble postures in our own flesh.

You tried to reason with me, didn't you Edward. You said I was under the curse of a pagan god. When I wouldn't listen you said you would break the curse by destroying the friezes. You took a great hammer and attacked the stones. We were stunned. At that moment I was actually proud of you, my darling. Proud of your courage. But you had no idea of the power you were challenging. No idea, poor darling. *[Kisses the bundle.]*

In a great burst of strength, we tore up the friezes from their moorings and rushed with them effortlessly to the crest of the hill. We bore the sacrifice as easily. Rent it from limb to limb, ate a part to satisfy the God, and hurled it at last into the sea. The god was pleased with us. It was like the old times — the pharmacos hurled.

And the friezes, no longer needed, the eternity of the marble embodied in our flesh, we cast them down too into the moonlit sea. Stone and flesh, time and space, everything expands, contracts, loses shape and forms again. The moon. See? *[Holds up the bundle like a mother showing a baby something.]* It's oval now, and now it's squat. Didn't it turn very dark, very fast?

[Transitional music and sounds.]

BEA and MARINA as elderly tourists come on dressed in black. They wear sunglasses and black turbans, and carry black purses. BEA has a small black bundle bound to her front. Note: as the scene progresses the three women take on the personae of PASIPHAE, ARIADNE and DELPHINE.]

MARINA: Is this where Nora said to meet her?

BEA: She said at the cliff top, overlooking the harbour. Look! That must be him.

[She indicates mannequin standing on edge of cliff.]

MARINA: Who?

BEA: Don't let him see you looking. He's the centre of the festivities, apparently.

MARINA: What kind of festivities?

BEA: She didn't say. But knowing Nora, it should be educational.

MARINA: I don't know why we're wearing black. It doesn't seem festive to me.

BEA: Nora said we should look dangerous. As though we mean business.

[DELPHINE/NORA enters clothed as the others. She is burdened down with a lot of paraphernalia, including a bird outfit, a portable CD player, two double axes, and a parasol. Ignoring the mannequin she dumps what she's carrying in front of him and moves over to the others.]

DELPHINE: Good. You found the place. I was afraid you'd be late.

MARINA: Do we look dangerous enough?

DELPHINE: You'll do.

BEA: What are these festivities you have in mind?

DELPHINE: You saw that guy over there? We're dressing him up like a bird.

BEA: Kinky. I never did it with a bird. Come on, Bonnie.

DELPHINE: Hold it. You don't just walk over there. The approach must be formal.

BEA: How do you mean, formal?

DELPHINE: This is a ritual. We're going to do a dance. I have the music all picked out. "Ariadne's Thread" it's called. *[Reads the cover.]* It's a slow progressive dance that weaves gradually towards him.

MARINA: Like a thread.

DELPHINE: Yeah. It's based on the partridge dance of courtship. Partridges are sexy little birds if you get them the right time of year. In the old days when they wanted to get it off, people made like partridges.

BEA: Kinky.

[DELPHINE starts the music. They join arms and move slowly and provocatively towards the mannequin.]

BEA: Hmm. Not bad.

MARINA: He looks familiar. Do we know him?

BEA: We may have seen him around the hotel. *[DELPHINE hands her the tunic of feathers and she and MARINA put it on the mannequin and tie it. DELPHINE binds his legs with red ribbons.]* Good fit! Cheer up, Kid, it looks really good. *[Runs her hand over his feathers.]* I think so, anyway.

MARINA: *[Pulling her hand away.]* Cassy! Cut it out.

BEA: Jealous?

MARINA: Can't you see he's nervous?

BEA: *[Sorts through the pile of things and brings up a penis bird. She pulls the string and the wings flap. She holds it under his nose and flaps the wings, trying to cheer him up.]* Watch the birdie!

DELPHINE: Quit clowning around and help me with this. *[Holds up a pair of wings.]*

BEA: We're going to turn you into a partridge, a sexy little partridge with red legs and feet.

DELPHINE: And wings made by the master himself. *[They attach the wings.]*

BEA: So when do we...?

MARINA: When do we what?

DELPHINE: First you say the words.

BEA: Oh yeah. *[The bundle that is tied to BEA's waist makes funny snuffling sounds. She undoes it and holds it up.]* Oh dear I forgot all about you. There now. Such a fuss. Who's my little favourite them. My star, my calf. And doesn't he look just like his father? Hush now. Here. Make yourself useful.

[She thrusts the bundle at Marina who looks at its contents with some surprise and dandles it gingerly. It quietens.]

BEA: You seem to have a way with him. There, my little moon calf. *[She turns towards DELPHINE and Mannequin. DELPHINE places a headdress on her that bears a crescent moon on its side in such a way as to make two silvery horns and hands her the parasol. She opens the parasol gracefully and looks to DELPHINE.]* Now?

DELPHINE: The words!

BEA: Okay! *[Clears her throat, poses formally and chants.]*
So that the lush grass may spring back against our feet,
So that the white spotted fish will sing once more from our streams,
So that our granaries be full and the dark caves brim with honey,

I command thee... *[Raises parasol.]*

DELPHINE: Wait! Not yet! *[Glowers at BEA who tries to stare her down and fails.]*

BEA: All right then.

That the white ravager may cease his predations,
And the dread pollution be lifted from our shores and meadows,
In the name of the eternal Bee,
And the all-seeing, marble-breasted Moon,
I command thee....

DELPHINE: Finish it!

BEA: *[Sighs.]* So that the stance of acolyte be eternally relinquished.
So that we may be done with the vicious cycle of fantasy,
That we may free ourselves from the sorcery of our own enchantments,
And court the danger at the centre,
In the name of the labrys, the spiral and the ineffable cave,
I command thee: Jump!

[The mannequin stands, unmoving.]

BEA: Well! What are you waiting for? *[She smacks him with the parasol and sends him flying off the cliff.]*

MARINA: *[Concerned with her bundle, turns just in time to see Mannequin flying off the edge.]*
Mother! What have you done?

BEA: He dropped like a stone.

DELPHINE: *[Gathering up bits of paraphernalia and tossing them over the cliff.]* They always do.

BEA: That should clear the air. I feel better already. *[Flaps the wings of the phalloi bird once or twice and send it over the cliff.]*

DELPHINE: *[Picking up the double axes.]* Come on. We have work to do.

MARINA: Must we?

BEA: Put that down. *[Tearing the bundle from MARINA's hands BEA throws it away and shoves the double axe into her hands. MARINA gasps. When she bends to pick it up the bundle comes loose, opens out and we see it is empty.]*

The women take up the double headed axes and prepare to file off.]

DELPHINE: We must be finished with him before the moon sets.

BEA: *[Looking down.]* Shouldn't take long. .. My God! It isn't possible! He survived the fall. He's getting up.

DELPHINE: We can't let him get away. You take this path. I'll go that way. And you, Girl. Go by way of the theatre, through the sanctuary of Pan. That's his only other possible route. Get moving. We must get to him before the moon sets.

[They all exit. There is general chaos: cries, Alarms, music, swirling lights, moving figures. MARINA comes on helping ORPHEUS/THESEUS who is dressed as the mannequin, but dishevelled.]

MARINA: It's all right. They haven't seen us. You've nothing to fear now. I'll take care of everything.

ORPHEUS: We must be almost at the palace by now.

MARINA: Yes it's just over that rise.

ORPHEUS: Do you think we're wise in returning there?

MARINA: It's the best place to be, right now.

ORPHEUS: I thought the hills would be safer.

MARINA: That's the very worst place you could go. The Ourebasia has started, the sacred mountain dancing. The hills will be swarming with women. I'll hide you in the palace. No one knows its labyrinthine heart as I do. You'll be safe there till the moon sets.

ORPHEUS: By then I'll be on the ship to Athens.

MARINA: *We'll* be on the ship.

ORPHEUS: You? No. It's too dangerous.

MARINA: You said we'd go together.

ORPHEUS: Look, you must know how grateful I am.

MARINA: Grateful! I thought you loved me.

ORPHEUS: I do! You know I do.

MARINA: Then let me come with you.

ORPHEUS: You're a determined little thing.

MARINA: Besides, you need me to get to the ship. Who else will lead you through all the mazy corridors to safety? *[He nods.]* Then be quiet with all that nonsense and come with me. I have the perfect hiding place. The one place they will not think of looking.

[Chaos and alarm and shouts and moving figures again mark the transition to PASIPHAE's chamber, with clothing trunk now closed. BEA and DELPHINE enter with axes. MARINA follows them reluctantly]

BEA: You stupid girl. You know you can't save him.

MARINA: I don't know what you're talking about.

DELPHINE: Tell us where you've hidden him. It's better to do these things with the moon as witness.

MARINA: Leave me alone. I can't help you.

BEA: You must not do this. You must not give in to the sorcery. Can't you understand that you must not allow him to escape if you want him in the end.

DELPHINE: We can find him without her help.

BEA: It will take too long.

DELPHINE: Think! Where would she hide him? Where is the last place we would think of looking? Listen did you hear something?

[There is a noise. They pause turn slowly around facing the trunk and move inevitably towards it. MARINA watches in horror as they move to the trunk, open it and hack at whatever is inside. Horrible screams and noisy chaotic blackout.]

[THEO/DESK CLERK is behind desk. MARINA is there. Somewhere onstage is dismembered Mannequin sans head.]

MARINA: He can't have gone. I was supposed to meet him here.

THEO: Regardless of what your plans were, Mr. Deianeiros checked out last night. Paid his bill and left. On the last ferry.

MARINA: I don't understand. We were supposed to go together. This morning. Did he leave a note?

THEO: *[Checking her box.]* No.

MARINA: Check his box as well.

THEO: No one left any notes. *[Taking pity on her.]* The festival isn't over yet. There will be dancing this afternoon up at the theatre. And a play. The play is always the highlight.

MARINA: Thank you. *[Wanders off disconsolately.]*

[BEA is on the phone. She is observed by PELEUS.]

BEA: Barney? Is that you? I've been trying to get through for days. You wouldn't believe this place. It's mad. Delirious! It's been terrible without you, Barney. If you don't come soon, I might do something crazy. ...Marina? Oh you know young people. She found someone she likes and there's no holding her back. She's going off with him on a tour of the Peloponnesus ... Of course I'm alone. And, believe it or not, I miss you. I've been having a really boring time...Oh just lying on the beach drinking retsina. You know how it is.....Nothing at all really, just waiting for you to get here so my vacation can begin... What?... You're not coming. I didn't think you were. .. No....I know... Yes, I know! I'll manage... I'll be fine. *[Is about to hang up, then cries into the phone.]* Damn it, I won't be fine! I won't be fine! *[Hangs up phone slowly.]*

PELEUS: Maybe you need someone more like me. Have you ever thought of that?

BEA: Do I know you?

PELEUS: Well, I'm sort of your Everyman type. Poised here on the brink of self discovery. *[BEA rolls her eyes and moves away.]* Really, though. Consider what I'm saying.

BEA: Please. I'm just not in the mood for pleasantries. Or propositions.

PELEUS: Not even valid ones? It's not so easy for us guys, either. Did you ever consider that? Maybe some of us are tired of keeping it all in place. Some of us want the grappling and the salty tasting breast of Thetis. You know what I mean?

[BEA is interested, but wary. Moves slowly away as lights change quality and there is a touch of music. The other women come on.]

PELEUS: Some of us seek it out.

DELPHINE: *[Dancing slowly, sings.]* Manic women, tempest-tossed with love,

BEA: *[Moves to join her but still looks at PELEUS.]* Glean like pearls through rage-tangled hair.

DELPHINE: Their shoulders are crisp apples waiting to be bitten.

MARINA: Yellow as pears, they ripen in the moonlight.

[The women dance and slowly come together. As they dance ORPHEUS, once again a head in the garden, continues with THEO and PELEUS:]

MEN: Men, hairy as apes, burlesquing passion,
Tired of words that crumble dry as poems,
With wine-dark prayers propitiate the moon,
They howl like wolves while women drift like rags,
Catching like moonlight on the branchy trees.

[The women now dance in a slow insinuating line and change their song.]

WOMEN:

We dance. We dance the creation of men.
We dance. We dance the destruction of me.
We dance. We dance to forget.
We dance to remember
We dance for consolation.

We dance.
We dance.
We dance power back into our lives.
We dance.
We dance.
We dance the sheer exhaustion of things.

THEO: Wait! Wait, I know you.

[DELPHINE breaks from the group and looks at him questioningly. She pulls the scarf from her hair and it falls in a tangle about her.]

THEO: Did you think I wouldn't know you? Where are you going? You can't leave now. Stay with me.

DELPHINE: Why should I?

THEO: Because you're all that's left. I've ended up in a place that I hardly recognize. The statues are only statues. *[ORPHEUS BEA and MARINA become stiff and unmoving. PELEUS sits on a wall looking disconsolately at BEA.]* The dance no longer pulses up from the ground. The light is real, cold day light drained of myth, while you...

DELPHINE: While I am older than you thought.

THEO: You are still my nut brown girl.

DELPHINE: The dream has faded.

THEO: The boundless dreamscape for a moment's warmth. Perhaps in the end we all trade off for that.

DELPHINE: So what are you suggesting here? Lunch? A bus tour of the Island?

THEO: I'll place your chaplet in the stars.

DELPHINE: I've heard that one before.

THEO: Trust me.

[Music flares up, wild and Panic. THEO and DELPHINE dance off together. The others unfreeze and follow in manic procession as light fades.]

THE END