

Diana (old lady)

Dia. (*shuddering.*) Ugh! How cold the nights are! I don't know how it is, but I seem to feel the night air a great deal more than I used to. But it is time for the sun to be rising. (*Calls.*) Apollo.

Ap. (*within.*) Hollo!

Dia. I've come off duty - it's time for you to be getting up.

Enter APOLLO. He is an elderly 'buck' with an air of assumed juvenility, and is dressed in dressing gown and smoking cap.

Ap. (*yawning.*) I shan't go out today. I was out yesterday and the day before and I want a little rest. I don't know how it is, but I seem to feel my work a great deal more than I used to.

Dia. I'm sure these short days can't hurt you. Why, you don't rise till six and you're in bed again by five: you should have a turn at *my* work and just see how you like that - out all night!

Apollo (Old man)

Dia. (*shuddering.*) Ugh! How cold the nights are! I don't know how it is, but I seem to feel the night air a great deal more than I used to. But it is time for the sun to be rising. (*Calls.*) Apollo.

Ap. (*within.*) Hollo!

Dia. I've come off duty - it's time for you to be getting up.

Enter APOLLO. He is an elderly 'buck' with an air of assumed juvenility, and is dressed in dressing gown and smoking cap.

Ap. (*yawning.*) I shan't go out today. I was out yesterday and the day before and I want a little rest. I don't know how it is, but I seem to feel my work a great deal more than I used to.

Dia. I'm sure these short days can't hurt you. Why, you don't rise till six and you're in bed again by five: you should have a turn at *my* work and just see how you like that - out all night!

Ap. My dear sister, I don't envy you - though I remember when I did - but that was when I was a younger sun. I don't think I'm quite well. Perhaps a little change of air will do me good. I've a great mind to show myself in London this winter, they'll be very glad to see me. No! I shan't go out today. I shall send them this fine, thick, wholesome fog and they won't miss me. It's the best substitute for a blazing sun - and like most substitutes, nothing at all like the real thing. (*To fog.*) Be off with you.

Mars (old man)

Mars hasn't got a lot of dialogue so please use these lines for Jupiter as your spoken audition

Jup. I am Jupiter, the King of the Gods. This is Apollo. This is Mars.

All kneel to them except THESPIS.

Thes. Oh! Then as I'm a respectable man, and rather particular about the company I keep, I think I'll go ...

Jup. No - no - stop a bit. We want to consult you on a matter of great importance. There! Now we are alone. Who are you?

Thes. I am Thespis of the Thessalian Theatres.

Jup. The very man we want. Now as a judge of what the public likes, are you impressed with my appearance as the father of the gods?

Thes. Well to be candid with you,, I am not. In fact, I'm disappointed.

Jup. Disappointed?

Jupiter (old man)

Enter JUPITER, an extremely old man, very decrepit, with thin straggling white beard, he wears a long braided dressing-gown, handsomely trimmed, and a silk nightcap on his head.

- Jup. Good day, Diana - ah, Apollo - Well, well, well, what's the matter? What's the matter?
- Dia. Why, that young scamp Mercury says that we do nothing, and leave all the duties of Olympus to him! Will you believe it, he actually says that our influence on earth is dropping down to *nil*.
- Jup. Well, well - don't be hard on the lad - to tell you the truth, I'm not so sure that he's very far wrong. Don't let it go any further, but between ourselves, the sacrifices and votive offerings have fallen off terribly of late. Why, I can remember the time when people offered us human sacrifices - no mistake about it - human sacrifices! Think of that!
- Dia. Ah! those good old days!
- Jup. Then it fell of to oxen, pigs, and sheep.
- Ap. Well, there are worse things than oxen, pigs, and sheep.
- Jup. So I've found to my cost. My dear sir - between ourselves, it's dropped off from one thing to another until it has positively dwindled down to preserved Australian beef! What do you think of that?
- Ap. I don't like it at all.
- Jup. You won't mention it - it might go further -
- Dia. It couldn't fare worse.
- Jup. In short, matters have come to such a crisis that there's no mistake about it - something must be done to restore our influence, the only question is, *What?*

Prettia (young woman)

- Prett. Well Venus, you know, is married to Mars.
- Sill. To Vulcan, my dear, to Vulcan. The exact connubial relation of the different gods and goddesses is a point on which we must be extremely particular.
- Prett. I beg your pardon - Venus is married to Mars.
- Nice. If she isn't married to Mars, she ought to be.
- Sill. Then that decides it - call it married to Mars.
- Prett. Married to Vulcan or married to Mars, what does it signify?
- Sill. My dear, it's a matter on which I have no personal feelings whatever.
- Prett. So that she is married to some one!
- Sill. Exactly! So that she is married to some one. Call it married to Mars.
- Prett. Now here's my difficulty. *Timidon* takes the place of Mars, and *Timidon* is my father!
- Sill. Then why object to Vulcan?
- Prett. Because Vulcan is my grandfather!
- Sill. But, my dear, what an objection! You are playing a part until the real gods return. That's all! Whether you are supposed to be married to your father - or your grandfather, what does it matter? This passion for realism is the curse of the stage!
- Prett. That's all very well, but I can't throw myself into a part that has already lasted a twelvemonth, when I have to make love to my father. It interferes with my conception of the characters. It spoils the part.

Mercury (young woman playing a boy)

- Mer. Home at last! A nice time I've had of it.
- Dia. You young scamp you've been down all night again. This is the third time you've been out this week.
- Mer. Well *you're* a nice one to blow me up for that.
- Dia. I can't help being out all night.
- Mer. And I can't help being down all night. The nature of Mercury requires that he should go down when the sun sets, and rise again, when the sun rises.
- Dia. And what have you been doing?
- Mer. Stealing on commission. There's a set of false teeth and a box of Life Pills - that's for Jupiter - An invisible peruke and a bottle of hair dye - that's for Apollo - A respirator and a pair of galoshes - that's for Cupid - A full-bottomed chignon, some auricomous fluid, a box of pearl-powder, a pot of rouge, and a hare's foot - and that's for Venus.
- Dia. Stealing! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!
- Mer. Oh, as god of thieves I must do something to justify my position.
- Dia. and Ap. (*contemptuously.*) Your position!
- Mer. Oh I know it's nothing to boast of, even on earth. Up here, it's simply contemptible. Now that you gods are too old for your work - you've made me the miserable drudge of Olympus - groom, valet, postman, butler, commissionaire, maid of all work, parish beadle, and original dustman.
- Ap. Your Christmas boxes ought to be considerable.
- Mer. They ought to be but they're not. I'm treated abominably. I make everybody and I'm nobody - I go everywhere and I'm nowhere - I do everything and I'm nothing. I've made thunder for Jupiter, odes for Apollo, battles for Mars, and love for Venus. I've married couples for Hymen, and six weeks afterwards, I've divorced them for Cupid - and in return I get all the kicks while they pocket the halfpence. And in compensation for robbing me of the halfpence in question, what have they done for me?
- Ap. Why they've - ha! ha! they've made you the god of thieves!
- Mer. Very self-denying of them - there isn't one of them who hasn't a better claim to the distinction than I have.

Daphne (young woman)

Enter DAPHNE, weeping.

Thes. Now then, Daphne, what's the matter with you?

Daph. Well, you know how disgracefully Sparkeion -

Thes. *(correcting her.)* Apollo -

Daph. Apollo, then - has treated me. He promised to marry me years ago, and now he's married to Nicemis.

Thes. Now look here. I can't go into that. You're in Olympus now and must behave accordingly. Drop your Daphne - assume your Calliope.

Daph. *(mysteriously.)* Quite so. That's it!

Thes. *(puzzled.)* Oh - that is it?

Daph. That is it, Thespis. I am Calliope, the Muse of Fame. Very good. This morning I was in the Olympian library, and I took down the only book there. Here it is.

Thes. *(taking it.)* Lemprière's Classical Dictionary. The Olympian Peerage.

Daph. Open it at Apollo.

Thes. *(opens it.)* It is done.

Daph. Read.

Thes. 'Apollo was several times married, among others to Issa, Bolina, Coronis, Chymene, Cyrene, Chione, Acacallis, and Calliope.'

Daph. *And* Calliope.

Thes. *(musing.)* Ha! I didn't know he was *married* to them.

Daph. *(severely.)* Sir! This is the Family Edition.

Thes. Quite so.

Daph. You couldn't expect a lady to read any other?

Thes. On no consideration. But in the original -

Daph. I go by the Family Edition.

Thes. Then by the Family Edition, Apollo is your husband.

Enter NICEMIS and SPARKEION.

Nice. Apollo your husband? He is my husband.

Daph. I beg your pardon. He is *my* husband.

Sillimon (any age, but younger than the Gods)

- Sill. Bless their little hearts, I can refuse them nothing. As the Olympian stage-manager I ought to be strict with them and make them do their duty, but I can't. Bless their little hearts, when I see the pretty little craft come sailing up to me with a wheedling smile on their pretty little figure-heads, I can't turn my back on 'em. I'm all bow, though I'm sure I try to be stern!
- Prett. You certainly are a dear old thing.
- Sill. She says I'm a dear old thing! Deputy Venus says I'm a dear old thing!
- Nice. It's her affectionate habit to describe everybody in those terms. *I* am more particular, but still even *I* am bound to admit that you certainly are a very dear old thing.
- Sill. Deputy Venus says I'm a dear old thing, and deputy Diana, who is much more particular, endorses it! Who could be severe with such deputy divinities?
- Prett. Do you know, I'm going to ask you a favour!
- Sill. Venus is going to ask me a favour!
- Prett. You see, I am Venus.
- Sill. No one who saw your face would doubt it.
- Nice. (*aside.*) No one who knew her *character* would.
- Prett. Well Venus, you know, is married to Mars.
- Sill. To Vulcan, my dear, to Vulcan. The exact connubial relation of the different gods and goddesses is a point on which we must be extremely particular.

Preposterous (any age, but younger than the Gods)

- Tips. I left it behind that I might not be tempted to violate my pledge.
- Prep. Minion!
- Attempts to get at him, is restrained by STUPIDAS.***
- Thes. Now, Preposterous, what *is* the matter with you?
- Prep. It is enough that I am down-trodden in my profession. I will not submit to imposition out of it. It is enough that as your heavy villain I get the worst of it every night in a combat of six. I will *not* submit to insult in the day time. I have come out, ha! ha! to enjoy myself!
- Thes. But look here, you know - virtue only triumphs at night from seven to ten - vice gets the best of it during the other twenty-one hours. Won't that satisfy you?
- STUPIDAS endeavours to pacify him.***
- Prep. (*irritated to STUPIDAS.*) Ye are odious to my sight! Get out of it!
- Stup. (*in great terror.*) What have I done?
- Thes. Now *what* is it Preposterous, *what* is it?
- Prep. I a-hate him and would have his life!
- Thes. (*to STUPIDAS.*) That's it - he hates you and would have your life. Now go and be merry.
- Stup. Yes, but why does he hate me?
- Thes. Oh - exactly. (*To PREPOSTEROUS.*) Why do you hate him?
- Prep. Because he is a minion!

Sparkion and Nicemis (romantic leads)

- Spark. Here we are at last on the very summit, and we've left the others ever so far behind! Why, what's this?
- Nice. A ruined palace! A palace on the top of a mountain. I wonder who lives here? Some mighty king, I dare say, with wealth beyond all counting, who came to live up here -
- Spark. To avoid his creditors! It's a lovely situation for a country house, though it's very much out of repair.
- Nice. Very inconvenient situation.
- Spark. Inconvenient?
- Nice. Yes - how are you to get butter, milk, and eggs up here? No pigs - no poultry - no postman. Why, I should go mad.
- Spark. What a dear little practical mind it is! What a wife you will make!
- Nice. Don't be too sure - we are only partly married - the marriage ceremony lasts all day.
- Spark. I've no doubt at all about it. We shall be as happy as a king and queen, though we are only a strolling actor and actress.
- Nice. It's very kind of Thespis to celebrate our marriage day by giving the company a pic-nic on this lovely mountain.
- Spark. And still more kind to allow us to get so much ahead of all the others - discreet Thespis! *(kissing her.)*
- Nice. There now, get away, do! Remember the marriage ceremony is not yet completed.
- Spark. But it would be ungrateful to Thespis's discretion not to take advantage of it by improving the opportunity.
- Nice. Certainly not; get away.
- Spark. On second thoughts the opportunity's so good it don't admit of improvement. There! *(kisses her.)*
- Nice. How dare you kiss me before we are quite married?
- Spark. Attribute it to the intoxicating influence of the mountain air.
- Nice. Then we had better go down again. It is not right to expose ourselves to influence over which we have no control.

TipSION (any age, but younger than the Gods)

- Tips. *(a very drunken bloated fellow, dressed, however, with scrupulous accuracy and wearing a large medal round his neck.)* My master!

Falls on his knees to THESPIS and kisses his robe.

- Thes. Get up - don't be a fool. Where's the claret? We arranged last week that you were to see to that?
- Tips. True, dear master. But then I was a drunkard!
- Thes. You were.
- Tips. You engaged me to play convivial parts on the strength of my personal appearance.
- Thes. I did.

Tips. You then found that my habits interfered with my duties as low comedian.
Thes. True -
Tips. You said yesterday that unless I took the pledge you would dismiss me from your company.
Thes. Quite so.
Tips. Good. I have taken it. It is all I have taken since yesterday. My preserver! (*embraces him.*)
Thes. Yes, but where's the wine?
Tips. I left it behind that I might not be tempted to violate my pledge.
Prep. Minion!

Thespis (any age, but younger than the Gods)

Mer. One year today. How do you like ruling the world?
Thes. Like it! Why, it's as straightforward as possible. Why there hasn't been a hitch of any kind since we came up here. Lor! The airs you gods and goddesses give yourselves are perfectly sickening. Why it's mere child's play!
Mer. Pretty simple, isn't it?
Thes. Simple? Why I could do it on my head!
Mer. Ah - I daresay you will do it on your head very soon.
Thes. What do you mean by *that* Mercury?
Mer. I mean that when you've turned the world *quite* topsy-turvy you won't know whether you're standing on your head or your heels.
Thes. Well, but, Mercury, it's all right at present.
Mer. Oh yes - as far as we know.
Thes. Well, but, you know, we know as much as anybody knows; you know; I believe, that the world's still going on.
Mer. Yes - as far as we can judge - much as usual.
Thes. Well, then, give the Father of the *Gods* his due, Mercury. Don't be envious of the Father of the *Gods*.
Mer. Well, but you see you leave so much to accident.
Thes. Well, Mercury, if I do, it's my principle. I am an easy man, and I like to make things as pleasant as possible. What did I do the day we took office? I called the company together and I said to them: 'Here we are, you know, gods and goddesses, no mistake about it, the real thing. Well, we have certain duties to discharge, let's discharge them intelligently. Don't let us be hampered by routine and red tape and precedent, let's set the original gods an example, and put a liberal interpretation on our duties. If it occurs to any one to try an experiment in his own department, let him try it, if he fails there's no harm done, if he succeeds it is a distinct gain to society. Take it easy,' I said, 'and at the same time, make experiments. Don't hurry your work, do it slowly, and do it well.' And here we are after a twelvemonth, and not a single complaint or a single petition has reached me.
Mer. No - not yet.

Cymon (any age, but younger than the Gods)

Thes. (*calling them.*) It shall be arranged. Cymon!

Cymon. (*as Time with the usual attributes.*) Sir!

Thes. (*introducing him to the three gods.*) Allow me - Father Time - rather young at present but even Time must have a beginning. In course of Time, Time will grow older. Now then, Father Time, what's this about a wet Friday in November for the last six months?

Cym. Well, the fact is, I've been trying an experiment. Seven days in the week is an awkward number. It can't be halved. Two's into seven won't go.

Thes. (*tries it on his fingers.*) Quite so - quite so.

Cym. So I abolished Saturday.

Jup., Ap., & Mars. (*rising.*) Oh but -

Thes. Do be quiet. He's a very intelligent young man and knows what he is about. So you abolished Saturday. And how did you find it answer?

Cym. Admirably.

Thes. You hear? He found it answer admirably.

Cym. Yes, only Sunday refused to take its place.

Thes. Sunday refused to take its place?

Cym. Sunday comes after Saturday - Sunday won't go on duty after Friday, Sunday's principles are very strict. That's where my experiment sticks.

Thes. Well, but why November? Come, why November?

Cym. December can't begin till November has finished. November can't finish because *I've* abolished Saturday. There again my experiment sticks.

Thes. Well, but why wet? Come now, why wet?

Cym. Ah, that's your fault. You turned the rain on six months ago, and you forgot to turn it off again.