

Urban Myth

By Mike Mariano

<http://mikemariano.com/urbanmyth/>

michaeljmariano@gmail.com

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The play opens in the Causcaus Mountains. PROMETHEUS, the defiant Titan, lies asleep on his side, chained to a rock. He is dressed only in a loincloth, and there appears to be ice water in a puddle by his side. An EAGLE enters. The EAGLE, PROMETHEUS'S eternal tormentor, is played here probably by a man wearing a cardboard cone over his nose and a Philadelphia Eagles jersey. The EAGLE approaches PROMETHEUS.

EAGLE

Rise and shine, Prometheus!

No response. The EAGLE shrugs and unfolds a tablecloth, placing it on a rock. He hums and puts down a plate, silverware, wine, etc., creating an admirable table setting. He turns back to PROMETHEUS.

Prometheus, come on. It's time to get up. The early bird catches the internal organ...

The EAGLE gives him a light kick. PROMETHEUS stirs. He looks up.

Why are you sleeping, man? It's past noon.

PROMETHEUS

It is? Oh, wow...

EAGLE

Yeah, I usually have you half disemboweled right now. What gives?

PROMETHEUS

Smiles and sighs:

You wouldn't believe the night I had last night...

EAGLE

Really?

PROMETHEUS

It was incredible.

EAGLE

Uh huh...

PROMETHEUS

What, you don't believe me?

EAGLE

Well, yeah, I mean-

PROMETHEUS

What?

EAGLE

Prometheus. You're chained to a rock in the middle of the mountains. It's hard to see how one night can stand out among the hundreds of thousands of other nights you've been here. What happened?

PROMETHEUS smiles and motions the EAGLE closer. The EAGLE kneels.

PROMETHEUS

There was this girl...

EAGLE

A girl?

PROMETHEUS nods.

Are you for real?

PROMETHEUS smiles and shrugs. The EAGLE breaks into a grin. He laughs and gets up.

Oh wow, man! That's incredible!

PROMETHEUS

Tell me about it...

EAGLE

Prometheus brings fire to the ladies, ha ha! Hey, did you give her a ride on the Titanic?

PROMETHEUS

Oh, well now...

EAGLE

Come on, man. What happened?

PROMETHEUS

Well, to tell you the truth, I don't remember much of last night.

He sits up.

I'm a little hazy on the details, but-

EAGLE

Wait; what's that?

PROMETHEUS

What's what?

The EAGLE reaches down and picks up a note. He reads:

EAGLE

"Don't get up." That's odd.

PROMETHEUS

What does that mean?

EAGLE

I don't know... you think it has something to do with that bag?

PROMETHEUS

Bag?

PROMETHEUS reaches in the puddle and pulls out a wet plastic bag. He reads:

"Ice." I don't get it. Why was I sleeping with a bag of ice on my-

Unconsciously, PROMETHEUS reaches for his side. His fingers pull back, not only wet, but bloody. He looks and sees a gaping hole in his side. He is shocked.

Oh my God!

EAGLE

Looking over:

Oh my God!

PROMETHEUS

I've been cut open!

EAGLE

Jesus Christ! I mean-Zeus! Look at that! Your liver's gone!

PROMETHEUS

It is?

EAGLE

Yeah!

PROMETHEUS

How can you tell?

EAGLE

I've been gorging on it for a while now; I'm familiar with when it's gone.

PROMETHEUS

Aw geez...

They both exhale, calming down.

Well, it could be worse. I mean, it grows back. Wherever it's gone to, at least I'll get a new one... You know, I don't remember last night that well, but you'd think I'd remember my anatomy unraveling.

The EAGLE nods. Then he realizes something.

EAGLE

Wait a minute. It was the girl!

PROMETHEUS

What?

EAGLE

The girl from last night! She must have taken my entrée—your liver!

PROMETHEUS

You think so?

EAGLE

I've heard about this, man. There's this group, I think of med school students — they pick people up in a singles bar, drug 'em, take 'em home, and take out their organs to sell on the black market. This girl must have been one of them.

PROMETHEUS

Are you sure?

EAGLE

She had to be. What else could it be? Nobody else has ever come through these mountains, and your liver didn't just fall out.

PROMETHEUS

I guess you're right...

EAGLE

Hey, I just want to let you know I'm on your side in this. Seriously. I mean, I do the same thing, but at least when I take out your liver I'm up front about it. This is... this is something else...

PROMETHEUS

You're telling me...

Suddenly the phone rings. PROMETHEUS and the EAGLE stare. After the first ring, PROMETHEUS starts for it.

EAGLE

Wait!

He does.

EAGLE (cont.)

Let the machine get it...

After the third ring the machine picks up. PROMETHEUS'S voice is heard.

PROMETHEUS

On answering machine:

Hi, this is Prometheus, and I'm out right now... Ha ha, just kidding: I'm tied to a rock! But no, I'm not screening my calls; I'm either being disemboweled by a giant eagle, or I'm on the can. So leave a message and I'll get back to you. Later!

Beeep.

AMY

On answering machine:

Hi, Prometheus? This is Amy. Listen, I think I left my hairbrush there last night. Can I come over to pick it up? Thanks; I'm on my way. See you soon!

Click. The EAGLE and PROMETHEUS stare.

PROMETHEUS

Rising anger:

That gorgon! That harpy! That... that...

EAGLE

Siren?

PROMETHEUS

That bitch! She did it! She took my liver, and now she's coming back here like nothing happened.

EAGLE

That's wrong, man. She's got no right to do that to you.

PROMETHEUS

And she probably plans to come back and take it again!

EAGLE

The nerve...

PROMETHEUS

My bile would be rising! If I could produce any...

He sighs. The EAGLE takes out a pack of cigarettes.

The worst part is that I thought this was real. I meet a girl, and we hit it off. She seems genuinely interested in what I have to say, and was totally cool about the whole tied-to-a-rock thing. I thought we could end up together.

EAGLE

Searching for a match:

Hey, get that out of your mind. You don't want to be stuck with the old ball and chain.

PROMETHEUS

Well I've got the chain...

PROMETHEUS thinks for a second, then inspects his crotch.

And nope, she didn't take that, either. I just thought after centuries of the same old thing, it would be nice to get to know somebody new.

EAGLE

Hey, Prometheus?

PROMETHEUS turns.

EAGLE (cont.)

You got a light?

The EAGLE extends his unlit cigarette. PROMETHEUS frowns.

PROMETHEUS

Hesitant:

Well, gee, I don't know if I have it on me.

EAGLE

Of course you do.

PROMETHEUS

Sighs:

Alright...

PROMETHEUS pulls out a lighter and lights the EAGLE's cigarette.

EAGLE

Thanks.

*The EAGLE takes a drag and exhales through his beak/nostrils.
PROMETHEUS pockets the lighter.*

PROMETHEUS

You're going to get me in trouble again...

EAGLE

Hey, no problem man; I'm heading out, anyway.

PROMETHEUS

You are? You aren't going to disembowel me?

EAGLE

Nah, what's the point? There's no chewy center in that Tootsie Roll Pop. I might as well just go home.

PROMETHEUS

Are you sure?

EAGLE

Yeah...

PROMETHEUS

You don't want to go for another major organ? Spleen? Gall bladder?

EAGLE

Nah, it's not my thing.

PROMETHEUS

I understand...

EAGLE

Hey Prometheus, listen: If this Amy chick stops by, you just tell her to keep walking. I've seen girls like her before, and they're not worth the trouble. She's only happy when she's got the knife in your back.

PROMETHEUS

I know what you mean. Thanks for looking out for me.

EAGLE

No problem. Let's try this again tomorrow, alright?

PROMETHEUS

I'm not going anywhere.

EAGLE

That's what I'm talking about. See you!

The EAGLE exits. PROMETHEUS sits. He looks at his side, feels it, then takes some water from the ice puddle and rubs his side. The bloody wound disappears.

PROMETHEUS

That didn't take long...

AMY enters, talking on a cell phone. PROMETHEUS stares.

AMY

On phone:

...No no no, don't worry, General; they're being shipped overnight. I assure you, that won't be a problem... Well, you'd be surprised. I'm known to work wonders with duct tape and just some Zip-Loc Bags.

She looks up, smiles and waves at PROMETHEUS. He weakly waves back.

Look, your check is in the mail, and so is my product. I think that's so far, so good. General, why don't I give you a call tomorrow, tomorrow sometime in the afternoon, and we can see how things turn out? OK? All right, you take care now. Bye.

PROMETHEUS gets up as AMY hangs up. She turns to him.

Prometheus...

She kisses him on the cheek.

Sleep well?

She keeps walking past him and admires the table setting.

PROMETHEUS

Out like a light.

AMY

Yeah, I know what you mean.

PROMETHEUS

Yeah...

AMY

Hey, this is a nice setup. Is this for us?

PROMETHEUS

Us? No, it's actually from this afternoon. Somebody likes to eat in style.

AMY

I see.

PROMETHEUS

Yeah, I told you about the whole eternal torture thing I go through each day, right?

AMY

Yeah, the giant bird. I remember that.

PROMETHEUS

Right... You know, there's a lot that I don't remember from last night...

AMY

Oh?

PROMETHEUS

Yeah. I don't recall when you left, how much I had to drink... And I don't remember seeing your hairbrush around here at all. Which is odd, because there aren't many places around here you can hide a piece of plastic...

AMY

Biting her lip:

Yeah...

PROMETHEUS

Amy, you want to come clean with me?

AMY takes a breath.

AMY

Prometheus, I'm sorry. I didn't come back for the hairbrush. I came back for you.

PROMETHEUS

Which part of me this time?

AMY

No, all of you! Prometheus, last night was really special to me, and I want-

PROMETHEUS

Cutting in:

Oh, I don't believe this; you're still dodging the question!

AMY

Question?

PROMETHEUS

Pointing to his side:

Yeah, this question!

AMY

It looks a little red...

PROMETHEUS

I wonder why. Did you want to tell me anything about it?

AMY

You might want to try some hydrocortisone.

PROMETHEUS

We're talking about a little bit more than poison ivy here, Amy, and you know it!

AMY is silent.

I woke up this morning with a hazy memory of our blissful evening and an incision in my side. I have a pretty good idea of what happened while I was asleep, and it isn't an idea I like. But first I want to hear you tell your side of the story.

Beat.

AMY

Prometheus, first of all, I want you to realize that we really did have a good time last night, honestly. From the moment I arrived, I found you charming and irresistible. I enjoyed myself, and you acted like you did, too. We talked, laughed, maybe had a little bit too much to drink...

She looks at him.

Although you may not have noticed...

PROMETHEUS crosses his arms.

And then we got a little drowsy, you went to sleep... and I took out a knife and surgically removed your liver.

PROMETHEUS stares.

It really was a wonderful evening.

PROMETHEUS

Controlling himself:

Amy... Where is my liver now?

AMY

It's safe, frozen... In my garage...

PROMETHEUS

Ah...

AMY

Pointing to his side:

And you've got a new one now, so things worked out...

No response.

More or less...

PROMETHEUS

Amy, why didn't you ask?

AMY

Would you have let me?

PROMETHEUS

Hell no!

AMY

That's why.

PROMETHEUS

And that's what the evening was all about! Sure we may have had a wonderful time—you may have really found me charming. But you were only after one thing. And well, you got it.

AMY

Prometheus, I don't see what the big deal is.

PROMETHEUS

Oh, you don't?

AMY

I took your liver!

PROMETHEUS

That's a big deal!

AMY

I know the myth; you grow a new one every day!

PROMETHEUS

That doesn't mean I want to!

AMY

Well you do; I'm just capitalizing on it.

PROMETHEUS

I'm a natural resource?!

AMY

That's one way to put it.

PROMETHEUS

Advancing toward her.

Here's another: You're an organ thief and I'm your bumper crop. You disgust me!

AMY

Oh, Prometheus; get over it.

PROMETHEUS

Get over it?!

AMY

If this is going to be a regular thing, I can't have you so agitated before the surgery.

PROMETHEUS stares, shocked. AMY extends a bottle of wine.

Now here; drink up.

PROMETHEUS

His face twisting, enraged:

I'll kill you! Ahhh!

He screams and extends his arms to strangle AMY. But he has reached the limits of his chains, and his arms stop apart from each other. PROMETHEUS, grunting, attempts to bring them together. AMY just watches.

Move closer!

AMY

No.

PROMETHEUS groans, staggers back, and collapses to the ground, panting. There is a silence. AMY sits on the table/rock.

Prometheus, about your torture: why do you put up with it?

PROMETHEUS

Torture. You mean this?

He tugs his chain. AMY nods.

Well Amy, I'm here because I believe mankind is capable of many ingenious things, and certain head gods disagree. Until I give in, I stay here. But I'm not going to; I am in defiance. After today I'm even more confident I'm right. If I can say anything about your little scheme, it certainly shows signs of ingenuity.

AMY

Thanks.

PROMETHEUS

No problem.

AMY

So then that's your eternity: as a backyard birdfeeder.

PROMETHEUS

A birdfeeder in defiance.

AMY

And what happened today?

PROMETHEUS

I went from the backyard to the operating table.

AMY

But you didn't get eaten.

PROMETHEUS

No.

AMY

No bloody spectacle. No pain.

PROMETHEUS

No liver.

AMY

But was it so bad?

PROMETHEUS

It was confusing.

AMY

But wasn't it better? For the first time in centuries, you woke up feeling great and spent the entire day so far without a bird shredding your side.

PROMETHEUS ponders.

Wouldn't you like to wake up tomorrow like that?

PROMETHEUS

Oh no. Not again. You're not cutting me again!

AMY

If I don't do it tonight you'll just have it out tomorrow morning. Is that what you want?

PROMETHEUS

Yes. The eagle and I go way back; we're friends now.

AMY

Prometheus, he's still your torturer; it's the Stockholm Syndrome.

PROMETHEUS

How do you catch that? I've never even been to Stockholm.

AMY

Prometheus, you've gotten used to your torture. Now I think you should get used to this.

PROMETHEUS

And forget about the torture? Amy, I am in defiance. I'm standing up for my beliefs and for all of mankind! That's not something you just have surgery and forget about. Amy, the eagle was right; I should have told you to just keep walking...

PROMETHEUS turns away. AMY approaches him.

AMY

Prometheus. I know you feel the weight of the world on your shoulders...

PROMETHEUS

No, that's my brother Atlas.

AMY

Whatever. But if you aren't going to think of yourself, then at least think of us.

PROMETHEUS turns, skeptical.

I came here yesterday with just business on my mind. But after last night... Prometheus, I really think we have a connection. Didn't you think so?

PROMETHEUS

Amy, it's true that I've hit it off with you real well. I haven't felt like this in a long time, but really, I don't get out much.

AMY

Prometheus, I know we just met, but I really think we can make something work. Can't we give it another shot?

PROMETHEUS turns, again. AMY gets even closer.

I'll be gentle.

PROMETHEUS looks at AMY. He sighs.

PROMETHEUS

Well, what do you want to do tonight? I have Scrabble.

AMY

Scrabble's great.

PROMETHEUS

Let me set it up.

PROMETHEUS starts off behind his rock. He stops and turns to AMY.

You know, the eagle's too good at this game; I never have a chance.

He smiles at her.

I'm glad I found somebody new to play with.

PROMETHEUS exits. AMY walks over to the table/rock and picks up a knife.

AMY

So am I...

She pockets the knife and starts off after PROMETHEUS. The lights fade and the play ends.