

Urban Myth

by Mike Mariano
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mikemariano@hotmail.com
www.mikemariano.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.)

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!

(Beep.)

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.)

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.)

PROMETHEUS: (cont.)

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.)

THE END