

ALCHEMY

ONE ACT

Written by

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

- RHODA: Is a late twenty year old, or older, female, who is an administrator for a geriatric playwriting contest at an old age home.
- ANGELA/EOS: Is a fifty-five year old, or older female, who is dressed as a Greek Goddess who sings and strums a lyre.
- TIM/TITHONUS: Is a over fifty-five year old, or older, male and audience member dressed in a shirt and long pants. When he takes off his pants he is dressed in a loincloth and nothing else.
- GERRY/GANYMEDE: Is a over fifty-five year old, or older male, audience member who is dressed in a shirt and long pants. He also performs as a beautiful young man who was mortal but Zeus has turned him into a Greek God. As a Greek God he is dressed in a loin cloth and nothing else.

THE SET

The set is a stage at an old age home. On the stage is a chair facing the audience next to a table. The table is covered by a floor length white tablecloth.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This is a comedy with emotional undertones.

RHODA

Stands center stage is holding a clipboard and a big bag of snacks. All right ladies and gentlemen this is the last call for scripts for the Senior Playwriting Project. Anymore scripts?

ANGELA

ANGELA enters dressed as a Greek Goddess and is carrying a lyre. Looks around, a little lost, and then sees RHODA. ANGELA addresses RHODA and the audience.

Is this the old people's playwriting project?

RHODA

(Does a double take and puts down a bag of snacks she is holding.)

Angela, did you forget to take your meds today?

ANGELA

What do you think I'm going to a pilates class on Mount Olympus? Maybe yes...? Maybe no...?

RHODA

...They are in the little paper cup next to your bed... Where they are every morning...

ANGELA

...Maybe oops? Is this the old people's playwriting project?

RHODA

You got a script for the Seniors Playwriting Project?

ANGELA

(Pulls out a piece of paper and reads it.)

"The Project is looking to further examine the experience of aging in modern America."

RHODA

Angela, do you have a script? You are late. We are about to start Bingo.

ANGELA

I don't have a script but I've got something to say. I want to submit. It doesn't exactly say scripts. It says "looking to examine the experience of aging."

(Reading)

"...Through the stories we tell we honor the wisdom we gather as we celebrate the experience of getting older." I want to submit an improv.

RHODA

You need a script.

ANGELA

(To the audience.)

I lost my husband a couple of months ago. We were married for forty years. I can't get over losing him. That's what I want to talk about. My husband used to say "if you feel sad do something for somebody else."

RHODA

Do you have a script? We are about to do Bingo.

ANGELA

I want to talk about love and missing somebody every day and every minute of every day but I can't do it by playing Bingo, Bridge, Scrabble or one of your activities like write a geezer script. I've got to make people laugh so I can get out of myself. I want to do this in my husband's name. In his memory.

RHODA

We all remember your husband, Angela. He was a wonderful and delightfully nasty old man. He was an irreverent ancient Greek professor - and I mean irreverent! "He kept you laughing every day for years. He slowly wasted away but he kept you laughing every day. He died in your arms." You are repeating yourself again. These scripts are about the living. Okay I've got to get ready for this? It's almost bingo time.

ANGELA

(Looks over at the audience.)

With an Improv I need volunteers. Any volunteers out there? Any actors? I want to submit my improv.

TIM

(TIM raises his hand. He is in the audience.)

I'll volunteer, but I don't want to say anything.

ANGELA

Nothing?

TIM

Nothing. I'm new here. I just moved in last night.

ANGELA

How 'bout we compromise. You don't say anything except ...once when I signal, then you say anything that comes to mind or just jump in. But just once. This is all improv.

TIM

Okay.

ANGELA

Okay! Come on up here. What's your name?

TIM

Tim.

(TIM comes up on stage and shakes Angela's hand.)

ANGELA

So Tim tell us a little about yourself. So why did you volunteer?

TIM

It's a good idea what you're ex-husband said. "When you are sad do something for someone else." I lost my wife two months ago. It's been sad. I like that you are here. Good for you.

RHODA

I am so sorry but its time for Bingo.

ANGELA

He is my volunteer.

RHODA

You don't have a script! You've got to turn in a script!

ANGELA

You don't say no improv. I want to address you about the wisdom of old age.

RHODA

Welcome Tim. You waiting to play Bingo?

TIM

No, regrettably, I had to move in here. I'm single now.

RHODA

It's okay, You will make lots of new friends here.

TIM

It's improv. Maybe we fall in love on stage.

ANGELA

Before or after your one line?

(ANGELA and TIM both laugh.)

TIM

(Trying to flirt.)

I don't know - It's improv. You a little lonely?

RHODA

(Points at the audience.)

These people here all submitted a script. You don't have a script everybody goes upstairs or we play Bingo now?

GERRY

(Stands up in the audience.)

We got time. We don't have to play Bingo.

(Looks around for approval
from the audience.)

We can do improv.

RHODA

I don't have time for this.

(Starts to pick up her bag
of snacks.)

ANGELA

(To RHODA)

Do you have time for an age discrimination law suit?

RHODA

(Beat)

I hate this job.

ANGELA

(Points at the audience.)

Just for you we can make it a comedy about aging.

RHODA

Okay, go on. I can't believe this! We don't have to play
Bingo.

(Everyone applauds.)

ANGELA

I need one more volunteer. We need at least three people.

(Pointing at Gerry.)

What was your first love?

GERRY

The Rolling Stones.

ANGELA

Great. Would you be a volunteer?

GERRY

Yes. I'll be a volunteer.

ANGELA

Come on up here. We've got a cast! Come on up here. What is
your name?

(GERRY stands up and enters
the stage.)

GERRY

Gerry. I'm a little bit shy but I like the Rolling Stones.

ANGELA

(To All)

This is good. Get involved. Okay, this is how it works. I will setup a situation and you, Tim, speak your one line whenever you feel it coming and Gerry you jump in whenever you feel there is a part for you. The situation is, it is ancient Greece and I am a grieving widow.

RHODA

What is this play about?

ANGELA

Sex.

RHODA

(Jumping in.)

No it's not!

ANGELA

Okay, it is about grieving the loss of the love of your life.

RHODA

If you even get close to talking about sex I'm blowing the whistle and everybody goes to the penalty box and we play Bingo!. Did you bring props?

ANGELA

No. We don't know what we are going to say. How could we bring props?

RHODA

You were threatening old people sex! You had me worried!

ANGELA

That's inappropriate! It is about a widow's sadness at the loss of the love of her life. Do you know the ancient Greek story of EOS and Tithonus?

RHODA

No.

GERRY

No.

TIM

No.

ANGELA

It's improv.

(To GERRY and TIM.)

Jump in when you can contribute. I'll set it up.

(Starts the improv.)

By way of introduction, I'm Eos, the Goddess of the Alchemy of the dawn. So I just made a decision and I need to share. Okay. Almost three thousand years ago I met this real cute guy, Tithonus, ...I mean a really good looking kid, I mean, really! He had a body, oh my God, what a body...

RHODA

Whoa! Whoa!...

EOS/ANGELA

And such a nice... family, Prince of Troy... He put on a little weight - all men do - but so what. I loved the guy but we had one big problem... He was mortal. He was the love of my life and he was going to die! ... So we talked it out and Tith, that's what I called him back then. Tith says to me, so why don't you go ask Zeus if I could be like, immortal. So I pray to Zeus: "How about you do me a big favor? Make Tith immortal!" So I sense Zeus is a little jealous because you know he wants to jump on everybody: I mean women, men, sheep, goats, everything.

RHODA

Whoa! Whoa!...

EOS/ANGELA

...Zeus goes "Okay but it's irrevocable if I do." And I say, "Okay." I mean I'm getting perfect sex forever! For-ever! I mean till the end of time! So what's wrong with that?

RHODA

No! Don't go off track on me... I'm serious!

GERRY

Excuse me I want to be Zeus.

EOS/ANGELA

...So Zeus makes Tith immortal but there is this problem. I forgot to ask for eternal youth. I didn't know I had to ask for eternal youth. I think Zeus should have told me. When you are in love like that you expect to live forever.

(MORE)

EOS/ANGELA (CONT'D)

It was in the fine print or something...? I never gave up. Every day I would get up and get the dawn going and have breakfast with Tith and sing that prayer to Zeus begging him! ...Begging him to give Tith eternal youth. He is dying in front of me. Day after day. Week after week. Month after month. Year after year... I am losing him. The world keeps changing. Everything keeps changing. Religions? Air travel? Space travel? Global warming? Pollution? I mean it feels like all the languages I grew up with are now lost languages. He is dying. I blame him. I'm crying. He blames me. I blame Zeus. Zeus won't pick up the phone. Every morning all alone I'm praying and singing to Zeus.

GERRY

That's horrible! I don't want to be Zeus anymore. What was that prayer you sang to Zeus as each day would come and go?

Starts strumming the lyre then starts to sing.

EOS/ANGELA

Behold the gold of your first morning light.
I am Eos the Goddess of the dawn
Behold my Alchemy that brings day from night.
Oh Zeus, help to make right what went so wrong.

GERRY

That's horrible! It must have been in the fine print or something?... Oh, I'm sorry I interrupted your prayer.

EOS/ANGELA starts singing again.

EOS/ANGELA

...Save my husband, Tithonus, save his light.
Each day he's another day further gone
Into his evening shadows and his night
And the dying heart beat of his dying song.

So what would you do? Somebody had to look at the fine print. ...So I had to get a lawyer. ...My first lawyer was the best I ever had.

(Looking over a RHODA)

You heard about Socrates? Well, he died. Plato?

(MORE)

EOS/ANGELA (CONT'D)

Socrates was his teacher but he died too. That was a couple of millenniums ago. It's been downhill ever since. Daniel Webster? Mark Twain named a frog after him. You know? But I've got a new guy on retainer but I know it is over. They keep dying off. I mean I've been loyal for over two thousand years...

RHODA

(Interrupting)

...And oh you must be so tired after four thousand years... so let's have a snack break and then nap time!

RHODA goes into her bag and pulls out some juice, a box of Raisin Bran and puts it on the table.

GERRY

Can I be the lawyer?

RHODA

That's it! I'm not letting this keep getting off track. Okay, where are you going? I'm imposing props. Let's get back to breakfast snacks. Stick with the props. Doesn't Bingo sound better and better?

GERRY

No Bingo sucks.

RHODA

(Searches her bag.)

Let's get back to snacks or I'm blowing the whistle on this. I got a cereal bowl, some grapes, Raisin Bran, some more raisins. Doesn't everybody love raisins?

EOS/ANGELA

(Beat)

Okay. We can work with props. Grapes and raisins...? Okay. ...I mean Tith, month after month, it seemed like after a couple of millenniums... got shriveled up. ...Okay I mean after a while he shrunk down to like the size of a grape and then all the way down to a raisin the size of a pebble. Hard like rock. He's got no friends. He looks like a raisin. I keep him in the bowl. Aging is not for the faint of heart... He's over here on the table. He's over here on the table.

RHODA

Okay where are you going with this?

EOS/ANGELA

We have breakfast together every morning... I'll tell you where I'm going! I pick out the raisins so he thinks he has friends because the raisins look like him.

Takes the props which RHODA provided to the table and picks up a tiny little raisin and kisses it and puts it in the bowl.

He's not much of a conversationalist at breakfast...

Goes back to the chair and starts strumming the lyre but stops.

He only says two things. He just keeps repeating: "I wanna die. I wanna die." Or sometimes he just says "Help me." "Help me." Did you ever see this old black and white movie called "The Fly"? This guy and a fly get caught up in a time machine and they get sort of mixed and this fly is buzzing around and all he can say is "Help me. Help me." ...So I get angry! Why does the love of my life have to die?

GERRY

Can I play the raisin?

EOS/ANGELA

(Starts strumming the lyre but stops.)

So just today. Moments ago, after all this suffering I came to a decision which I want to share with you.

(Starts strumming the lyre but stops and starts laughing.)

Okay people! Okay Tim and Gerry, we can work with this. It is time to IMPROVISE!

(Beat)

Some how I've got to get over this sadness. I want a little action? ...Is this time for an open marriage?

GERRY

Strike that. I don't want to play the raisin anymore.

EOS/ANGELA

...So I decided that there is this really sexy boy named Ganymede, also a nice Trojan boy, great body. I love those Trojan boys. My kind of man.

GERRY

Oh yeah, man, and I am Ganymede!

EOS/ANGELA

(Starts strumming the lyre
but stops.)

So... I started thinking about this. Anger turns to revenge! It would be like killing two birds with one stone. Ganymede is Zeus's lover and yes... his cup holder.

RHODA

What? Cup holder?

GERRY

You hold my cup?

EOS/ANGELA

No. No. No a cup for wine. But the good thing is because he is Zeus's lover, Zeus already made him immortal so I don't have to deal with that problem again.

RHODA

Where we going?

EOS/ANGELA

Really! If Zeus granted him immortality and eternal youth, why didn't Zeus do that for Tith? He clearly knew better, the bastard.

RHODA

Stop it! Bad language? How about "unexpected child?"

EOS/ANGELA

...So when I decided that I wanted an open marriage this is not only good because I can have...

RHODA

No! Okay, that's it!

RHODA puts both fingers in her ears and tries to make sound blocking noises.

EOS/ANGELA

...But it also offers me the justice through revenge against Zeus for treating Tith so badly for all those last years. I am angry! So in anticipation of making up for thousands and thousands of years of abstinence this morning I put Ganymede on my speed dial.

(Nods to Gerry.)

So I want you all to be part of all of this: Like watch. I'm going to ring him up and invite him over.

EOS/ANGELA hits speed dial on her handheld phone and in a lusty voice leaves a voice message.

Hey Ganymede why don't you come on over. Don't dress up. A loincloth will be just fine... just keep it loose.

GERRY

Could that be my phone ringing?

EOS/ANGELA

(Starts strumming the lyre and begins to sing.)

Behold my Alchemy that brings day to light..

GANYMEDE/GERRY

GERRY recognizes his moment, runs off stage to assume the character GANYMEDE.

Yeah baby I'm on my way!

Reenters in a loin cloth gyrating his hips and singing into a handheld mic like Mick Jagger.

"I am the little red rooster
Too lazy to crow for day.
Keep everything in the barnyard
Upset in every way."

EOS/ANGELA

Well, Hello! You look the same. That's what's so great about eternal youth? How's Zeus?

GANYMEDE/GERRY

Same petulant bastard he's always been.

EOS/ANGELA

Well at least he gave you eternal youth.

GANYMEDE/GERRY

(He points at the snacks.)

The hell he did. I've got to eat healthy food endlessly and chug probiotics. I'm always hungry.

EOS/ANGELA

Zeus gave you that?

GANYMEDE/GERRY

Goes over and opens the box of
Raisin Bran and grabs a hand full
and shoves it in his mouth.

Eternal youth? At first yeah. We all get told that but then not anymore. I don't trust the guy. It is basically chug probiotics and Raisin Bran to keep me regular.

EOS/ANGELA

That's the secret mix? This is a game changer! Wait till I put this into my new morning song to Zeus?

Starts playing the lyre and
composing a song with her back to
Ganymede as Ganymede makes a pile
of raisins and starts eating them
in handfuls. He puts the mic on
the table beside the pile of
raisins.

Behold my Alchemy that brings day from night.
I am EOS the Goddess of the Dawn
So behold this bitch is gonna set things right!...

RHODA

(Unplugs her ears.)

Did I just hear the "B" word? No! I mean the other "B" word?

EOS/ANGELA turns and looks over at Ganymede, does a double take and then hysterically screams at him.

EOS/ANGELA

Wait! Don't eat the raisins!

GANYMEDE/GERRY

(Keeps eating.)

No problem, I've got probiotics...

EOS/ANGELA

Oh my God did you eat them all?

GANYMEDE

(Keeps eating.)

I think so.

EOS

Was one particularly crunchy? Sort of like a pebble?

GANYMEDE/GERRY

Not that I remember.

EOS/ANGELA

You feel anything jumping around in your stomach?

TIM sees his moment and gets on his hands and knees and crawls under the table.

RHODA

(Screaming)

Oh no is something wrong with the raisins?

GANYMEDE/GERRY

You mean like a little rumble?

EOS/ANGELA

Did any of the raisins cry for help?

GANYMEDE/GERRY

Help?

EOS/ANGELA

Did any of the raisins beg to die?

GANYMEDE/GERRY

You are feeding people suicidal raisins?

EOS/ANGELA

(Hysterically screams at
him.)

No and don't eat the Raisin Bran either! What's it feel like
when you eat the Raisin Bran?

GANYMEDE/GERRY

I eat a hand full and I explode back to my youthful self
instantly!

EOS/ANGELA

Oh God don't eat the Raisin Bran until... Never mind. Do you
ever throw up? I mean voluntarily. Like could you do that
now?

Over the mic which sits on the
table next to the remaining
raisins comes a little amplified
voice: "Help me" (Beat) "Help Me!"
comes from under the table and
both EOS and GANYMEDE stop in
their tracks.

Was that your stomach?

GANYMEDE/GERRY

No. What was that?

EOS/ANGELA

The love of my life!

GANYMEDE/GERRY

Where is the love of your life?

EOS/ANGELA

Probably in your lower intestines.

GANYMEDE/GERRY

But the voice came from the microphone.

EOS/ANGELA

Thank God!

She runs over to the table and
sorts through the remaining
raisins and picks up one and holds
it high in the air and then kisses
it and puts it in the bowl.

Do you have Raisin Bran and probiotics that I can have? I
want to bring him back!

GANYMEDE/GERRY hands her a zip lock
bag and EOS pours it into the bowl
and looks down at the bowl and
instantly the table flies into the
air and turns over and TITHONUS jumps
up from under the covered table and
stands in his loin cloth.

TITHONUS/TIM

(TITHONUS/TIM stretching his
arms out toward EOS.)

Want to fuck?

GERRY

(Everyone bursts out
laughing.)

Wow! That is great!

They high five each other as RHODA
looks on horrified.

RHODA

(Screaming at everybody.)

Okay! It is time for Ping Pong!

(LIGHTS GO OUT.)

END OF PLAY