

“Mythos”

A Play in Two Acts About the Ability to Choose

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Abstract

This paper presents a two-act play in the fantasy genre about the ability to choose, titled “Mythos.” The goal of the play is to persuade audience members to consider that regardless of their past, they still have the ability to choose their future. Although this play is written from a Christian perspective, it does not deal directly with Christianity. “Mythos” centers on Margaret, a young woman who is afraid of making the choices necessary to progress her life. Instead, Margaret is waiting on her “call to adventure,” which, according to Joseph Campbell, was the beginning of most heroes’ adventures in Greek mythology. Research comes from a variety of texts on the fantasy genre, myths, and storytelling, as well as Jeffrey Hatcher’s guide *The Art & Craft of Playwriting* and the English Standard Version of the Bible.

“Mythos”: A Play in Two Acts About the Ability to Choose

Introduction

Throughout history, mankind has explained the unexplainable through stories. Everything from the beginning of the world to the end of any individual’s life has been rationalized through myth. The Greeks were one of the first civilizations with a complex, interconnected mythology that included gods, heroes, villains, demons, and monsters of any variety. The Greek mythos was an integral part of their culture, society, and religion. However, simply put, they were wrong. There was no Zeus, no Poseidon, and no Athena. There were no gorgons or Minotaurs. The Greeks chose to believe in the existence of something that did not exist.

Preface

As a Christian, I have also chosen to believe something that many people don’t believe: that Jesus is the Son of God, who came to earth to die so that I might live eternally with Him. I was raised in the Christian faith, yet I still reached an age where I had to choose for myself in whom or what I believed. Although many people believe Jesus to simply be a prophet or a truly good human man, I have chosen to believe that He is much more than that. For what reason do I believe this is true? I have plenty of evidence—history, archeology, and science have all proven that aspects of the source of my beliefs, the Bible, are true. There are more manuscripts of the Bible than any other classical work, and there is incredible consistency between them. Geological studies show that the earth’s layers of sediment were laid rapidly in a period of only a few hours, as is consistent with the biblical account of the flood. However, despite this evidence,

ultimately my decision comes down to faith. I chose and continue to choose to have faith in Jesus, even when I cannot physically see or hear Him.

Even today, throughout the world, people are still relying on myths. Today's myths are commonplace: money is power, beauty is supreme, and what the flesh wants is correct and acceptable. We live in a society of acceptance, tolerance, and selfishness. People choose to do what they want to do or what they believe is best for themselves, and according to them no one has the right to judge their choices. These myths permeate culture, and can be traced back to the fall of the first humans, Adam and Eve. Ultimately, these myths are rooted in a simple choice: the choice to follow one's own desires, or to believe in Jesus and follow Him.

This is a topic about which I am passionate. I have been in many situations myself where I have been dragged down by my past or present and have thus been afraid of my future. I have had to choose between staying on my current path, or through faith switching to get back on a path where God wants me to be. God has given me free will—I always have the power to choose. This play arose from the desire to remind people that they always have the ability to choose whether or not to pursue God.

There are many choices to be made in life. When posed with a choice to make, however, many people do not make a choice. In the book of Revelation, Jesus says that the church in Laodicea is “neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:15-16, English Standard Version). According to God's Word, the human side of salvation is based on making a choice. By not making a choice, one instead becomes lukewarm. This is the goal of this play: to remind people, both Christian and

not, that they have the power to choose. One's past does not direct one's future. Although the past can certainly impact one's future, every person has the free will, given by God, to choose to be on the right path.

Strategy

Plays have the ability to persuade people in a way different than other mediums. In *The Art and Craft of Playwriting*, Jeffrey Hatcher argues that the goal of a playwright is “to *compel* tired people, who have every reason to leave, to stay in their seats” (4). There must be a reason that the audience wants to stay in the theater. Audiences seek theater for a variety of reasons: to evaluate artistic merit, to be distracted, to have an emotional release, to be entertained, or to be posed with difficult questions or challenges. Playwrights must work hard to entertain their audiences and often provide them with both questions and answers. “Mythos” poses this question to the audience: are you willing to make the choice to change your future?

This play does not intend to bring up the Bible or Jesus in any explicit way. Rather, the themes of this play will read in different ways depending on the perspective and past experiences of each audience member. Christians will hopefully be challenged to choose to grow stronger in their faith, while non-Christians will be reminded of the power of choosing what they believe. Making this choice is not an easy one. Oftentimes, the best route is not the one that is easiest or more comfortable. Scripture lends itself to this concept. Matthew 7:14 says, “For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” The hard path—generally the tougher of two options—is often the best one to be on.

Style

“Mythos” will have moments of humor, as well as moments of depth and drama. Humor will especially be brought on by the play’s intruder, a man who claims to be a two-thousand-year-old slave of Zeus named Theodoulos. The challenger of the play is the play’s protagonist, Margaret, who wishes for her life to remain as it is. The battleground being fought over is Margaret’s future. Theodoulos will fight for Margaret’s future while having to face his own past. These two characters provide contrast: Theodoulos is afraid of his past, whereas Margaret is afraid of her future. Each character will help the other confront their fears.

Margaret desires to move forward with her life, but is fearful of the steps that need to be taken to achieve that progression. She thus becomes passive in the process. Robert Jewett and John Shelton Lawrence discuss this passivity in their work *The American Monomyth*. According to Jewett and Lawrence, the American monomyth depends on a savior to rescue the helpless public from an evil force. However, they claim that this structure is an “escapist fantasy” and that it “encourages passivity on the part of the general public” (210). In “Mythos,” this passivity is seen in Margaret, who waits for an open door or an opportunity to come her way. If she did not get the help she needs from Theodoulos, it seems that even if opportunity did knock, she would be too passive to even answer the door. “Mythos” presents a challenge to passivity and encourages its viewers to make positive, progressive choices in their lives.

The genre of “Mythos” is fantasy. This genre encapsulates a wide spectrum of more specific styles. W. R. Irwin presents an excellent base definition of fantasy in saying that it is “an overt violation of what is generally accepted as possible” (4). In *The*

Fantasy Tradition in American Literature, Brian Attebery simplifies Irwin's definition by simply saying that a story is a fantasy if it "treat[s] an impossibility as if it were true" (2). The impossible of "Mythos" is presented through the presence of Theodoulos, a man who fantastically appears through a bookcase and purports to be an ancient counterpart to the Greek heroes of legend. It is only late in the story that this fantasy begins to fall apart, as Theodoulos' true, and much more logical, past is revealed.

Oddly enough, logic is the foundation of fantasy. Fantasy, or a "deviation from the norm," as is described by T. E. Apter, is only possible if there is a norm in the first place (111). Apter claims that fantasy "depends upon the reader's ability to recognize a commonly acknowledged, or normal, world and to recognize descriptions as pertaining to, or failing to pertain to, normal conditions" (111). Margaret herself is an incredibly logical person, whose character is based in her understanding of history, pattern, and consistency. She exists in a fully-plausible, realistic world. The scenic design of "Mythos" reflects her in that it is initially very realistic. Only when Theodoulos, the representative of fantasy in this story, appears through a bookshelf in the library is there a semblance of fantasy. Likewise, Theodoulos' myths that play out onstage also break from expectation and present the audience with fantastic elements. Late in the play, fantasy is broken as Margaret forces Theodoulos to recognize his reality and, in turn, he causes Margaret to recognize hers.

Throughout the play, Theodoulos will retell a few Greek myths and legends to Margaret. These fantasy myths will play out on stage in front of the audience. Indeed, according to Gary Kern, the term "fantasy" is derived from the Greek word *φαντασία*, which refers to "images retained in the mind after perception: these might appear

haphazardly (what we would call *daydreaming*) or intentionally (what we would call *imagining*)” (184). Theodoulos uses imaginative stories to communicate important messages to Margaret, and also to escape from his present life. Stories and myths have the ability to transport people to a different time and place. Some stories show where one wishes to be, whereas other stories describe where one has been, and wishes to see no more. Stories permit people to daydream and picture themselves in other situations. In *Storytelling: Imagination and Faith*, William Bausch explains that stories help us remember “our past, our history, our glories, and our shame” (36). Theodoulos’ stories reflect on his fictional past. Later in the play, Margaret uses stories to tell Theodoulos’ true past, revealing not his glories but his sadness. Through Margaret and Theodoulos we see this twofold nature of stories: how they provide escape from and reflection on reality.

Target Audience

The target audience of “Mythos” is specifically those about to graduate college or those who have recently done so. I selected this audience because it is one to which I presently relate. As a graduating college student, I understand the stress of moving past college years and into the next chapter of my life. I have spent much of my college career waiting for a signal from God as to what the next step in my life should be, but have not frequently received answers. Instead, I have been reminded that God has given humanity free will, and the freedom to choose. There are many paths that I can choose and still glorify God within those choices. In encouraging the church at Colossae, Paul rallied the congregation that in “whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Colossians 3:17). Through this play, I want to encourage college students specifically to not passively wait on a

calling, but instead to use sound judgment and a biblical foundation to make choices within their lives that glorify the Lord.

Summary of the Project

Mythos tells the story of Margaret, a 26-year-old history graduate who is especially familiar with mythology. She is very familiar with Joseph Campbell's concept of the monomyth, or "hero's journey": the path that the heroes of ancient myth often followed on their grand quests. This journey consists of seventeen steps and begins with a "call to adventure." According to Campbell, the call to adventure "signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from the pale of his society to a zone unknown" (48). In mythology, this call is often to a dark forest, a high mountaintop, or a dangerous sea: all of which are difficult to reach or challenging places. In Margaret's reality, she is waiting for a call to her own adventure: namely, for a sign to appear and guide her into the next phase of life. Since graduating college four years before, Margaret still spends nearly all her time at the library, her college hangout, waiting for something to prompt her forward to her ensuing future. Instead, through her friends old and new, she learns that sometimes there is no external call to adventure. Instead there must be an internal choice to do what is necessary—to take risks, and often fail in the process—to move forward in life. Margaret has to choose her future, rather than wait for a future to choose her.

Plot Synopsis

Setting: a room of the public library in Hearth, Illinois.

Act I, scene I. The show begins by introducing the audience to Margaret, a twenty-six-year-old history major who still works her college job as a waitress and spends most of her time reading history books in the city library, where she is now. Margaret has a hard

time making choices, especially when those choices relate to her future. Over this scene her friends are introduced. All of them are Margaret's friends from college, yet all have made the choice to move on with their lives past college, whereas Margaret is still waiting for a call to adventure—a sign that indicates her next step in life. After her friends leave and Margaret is left alone, Margaret meets the toga-wearing Theodoulos, or “Ted,” who claims to be a 2,000-year-old slave of Zeus. Although Ted initially talked to Margaret for the conversation and mutual interest in mythology, he soon begins to take interest in helping her move forward in life and to make important choices. Ted narrates his own version of the myth of Perseus and Medusa to Margaret, hoping that explaining Medusa's poor choices will show Margaret the importance of making good choices. The myth plays out on the stage and is performed by the same actors who played Margaret's friends. The scene ends as Ted seems to disappear and Margaret leaves the library.

Act I, scene II. It is now the next day, around noon. Margaret is eating alone in the library, just as she has done since her first year of college. After a visit from her pregnant best friend Joanna and a conversation with a girl named Shauna who is passing through Margaret's library room, Margaret again is approached by Ted. He explains how his time as Zeus' slave is almost at its end, and how grateful he will be to be free from Zeus. Ted narrates a second myth to Margaret, this time the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, explaining how Margaret needs to plan ahead, just as Theseus planned ahead before entering the Minotaur's maze and used a trail of yarn to find his way out of the maze. Ted leaves the library, leaving Margaret to have a brief conversation with Roger, the librarian and Joanna's husband, who lends her some advice.

Act II, scene I. The second act opens on an empty library the following morning.

Margaret was unable to sleep the night before because she has started to believe Ted is actually 2000 years old. Because her job's limited pay has kept her from being able to buy her own computer, she sneaks into the library before it is open to use the library's computer and printed resources to read up on her mythology and fact-check the myths Theodoulos has claimed to have witnessed first-person. To her surprise, Ted has beaten her there and has set up a breakfast date with her on the checkerboard table. This date is not because he is attracted to Margaret, but rather because he is trying to break her out of her shell. He presents her with a third myth: this time, it is a fictionalized account of Margaret's past, reinterpreted as an epic myth. Margaret leaves the library and heads to work, having determined that Ted must be crazy. Ted tells Margaret to return to the library that night, where Ted, with Margaret's help, will finally make a stand against Zeus.

Act II, scene II. The scene opens on Ted, alone in the library at midnight, waiting on Margaret. Margaret finally arrives just as a thunderstorm begins. The power goes out. Rather than go along with Ted's plan to confront Zeus, she tells Ted that she did some research on him and found out who he really is: Theodore James Holt, a thirty-six-year-old widower who works as a life insurance agent. This time, we see Ted's real past acted out in front of us. Ted doesn't deny this: Theodoulos is simply a persona he adopted years ago. Ted's wife accepted him as he was, even though he pretended to be an ancient Greek hero. Even though his wife passed on and no one understands his lifestyle choice anymore, Ted still wants to live this way and help others make the choice to continue through their lives. He tells her that just because bad things happen, such as the loss of a

spouse, doesn't mean that one's future will turn out poorly as well. Life is about making choices. Sometimes people make choices for no reason other than because they want to, like how Ted chooses to live out his life like a Greek myth. Other times people have to choose between being oppressed by one's past, or being open-minded about one's future. As the storm builds, Margaret finally goes along with Ted's plan to confront "Zeus," even though she knows it is all in their imagination. As the storm subsides, the power comes back on as Margaret thanks Ted for his help. He disappears, and Margaret, alone in the library, finally sits down to apply for the job she's always wanted at the city fine art museum as the lights fade to black.

MYTHOS

ACT I

Scene One

AT RISE

Lights up on a quiet library room. The room is one of many in the old library, and is constructed mainly of dark, gothic wood. However, there are contemporary elements that have been added over the decades—a computer here, a fluorescent light there. A 1970s couch sits on one side of the room and an elaborate wood executive desk sits on the other. The walls are covered with books from all generations. Scattered about the room are a globe, a checkers table and two chairs, a rolling book cart, and other library typicals. Along the upstage side of the room is a balcony hall with bookshelves, stretching from one side of the stage to the other, exiting both ways. On the main level, there are doors on each side of the room, and a door headed upstage. A ladder or spiral staircase leads to the second level. MARGARET, a twenty-six-year-old history grad with frizzy hair, glasses, and an air of complacency, is sitting at a large, antique executive desk reading a book. This desk—this room—is her home away from home. Asleep on the couch across the room is her straightforward, blunt, but truly caring best friend JOANNA. The library is quiet, but only because it is so infrequently visited.

(MARGARET is at the last few sentences of a history book. She begins mumbling the last few sentences quietly to herself.)

MARGARET

“...between the slow but steady abandonment of the southern cities and the possibility of a drought having decimated the population, the Mayan civilization had many reasons to disappear. (becoming audible and clearer) The ruins left across Central America today are a testament to the power and dominance of the Mayan civilization.” (She slams the book closed, waking JOANNA.) Welp, another one down. Thank you (checking the author on the cover) Gregory Stephanopoulos.

JOANNA

What time is it?

MARGARET

Eight thirty-seven.

JOANNA

Eight thirt—you let me sleep here for three hours?

MARGARET

Help me pick another book. I've got a few more to get through this week.

(She ducks behind the desk and picks up a stack of a dozen books and places them on the desk.)

JOANNA

Margaret, the last thing I need is more sleep. All I do is sleep.

MARGARET

You're pregnant. You're allowed to sleep.

JOANNA

At night! Or a mid-afternoon nap...I'm four months pregnant and I sleep more than I'm awake. I thought I was supposed to not be able to sleep.

MARGARET (sorting through her books)

I've got two more on Mayan culture but I think I'm past that. "The Ghosts of Ancient Polynesia" looks fine, but I've read others by Carl Burns and he usually strays from the source material in his myth retellings...

JOANNA

Is Roger still here?

MARGARET

Yes. He pulled these two from the donations box for me. Thomas Berkshire's "Chinese Dragons and architecture" and this one which looks like an analysis of the development of Anglo-Saxon design.

(JOANNA gathers her things to track down ROGER.)

JOANNA

I have to stop coming here after work. I sleep more on that couch than in my own bed.

(ROGER, her husband and the head librarian, enters.)

ROGER

That's not an exaggeration.

MARGARET

Roger, who donated these?

ROGER

A woman a few blocks down, in the Victorian house. They didn't sell at her yard sale. (to JOANNA) I heard the book slam so I figured you'd be up.

JOANNA

Why didn't you wake me up? The couch smells like coffee and Bugles. Do you want me to smell like coffee and Bugles?

ROGER

There are worse things. (He hugs her.)

MARGARET

I can't pick. Joanna, pick one for me.

JOANNA

I don't care what you read.

MARGARET

Look. (She spreads the books out on the table.) There are twelve books. I'm going to read them all eventually so just pick one for me to start with.

JOANNA

Why can't you pick one yourself?

MARGARET

None of these is specifically calling to me. None of them is screaming my name.

ROGER

Then don't read one of them. (He begins looking for another book for MARGARET.)

MARGARET

But they all seem like good choices...I'll just read a chapter of each and go from there.

(SHAUNA, an attractive college girl, enters casually on the upstage balcony hall.)

JOANNA

You don't have to read another book. There are other hobbies.

MARGARET

This is my hobby. Reading through history. Civilizations, wars, personal stories. If their lives weren't interesting, they wouldn't have been written down.

JOANNA

So when is your autobiography coming out? What's it called? "This is the chair I sit in: the life of Margaret Jones"?

MARGARET

You want to write it?

ROGER

She just did. The title is the whole story.

MARGARET

I'm a history major. If anyone's allowed to just sit and read books, it's me.

ROGER

What about English majors?

JOANNA

Writers.

ROGER

Critics, librarians...plenty of other people have more reason to read books than you.

MARGARET

I'm prepping for starting my career. You can't be a historian if you don't know history.

SHAUNA

Catch. (She drops a book down to MARGARET.)

MARGARET

What, no—wait! (She dodges and lets the book fall to the ground.)

ROGER

Shh!

JOANNA

Roger, no one is here. She's the first new face in weeks.

SHAUNA

It's a good one.

MARGARET

Thanks.

SHAUNA

Sorry – I'm Shauna. I'm a junior at Helmsworth.

MARGARET

Nice to meet you. Margaret.

(SHAUNA continues offstage, looking for books.)

ROGER (in a loud whisper)

Let me know if you need anything! Tell your friends this place isn't abandoned!

JOANNA (to MARGARET)

Why does he bother whispering?

MARGARET

Edith Hamilton's classic *Mythology*. Funny. I've never read it.

ROGER

Then get started. It's better to open one of these and start reading than to sit and admire cover art.

JOANNA

(having thought of another) Editors. Editors read a lot of bad books. Oh gosh, that must be the worst career choice.

MARGARET

Fine. I'm a bibliophile. I like my books. Why else would I have made this into my second home? It's not for the company.

JOANNA

Ooh.

ROGER (overlapping)

You know I run the place, right?

JOANNA

It may as well be your first home. It's Saturday. How long have you been here today?

MARGARET

Since seven....thirty. This morning.

JOANNA

And have you left?

MARGARET

No.

JOANNA

Exactly.

ROGER

You have your own shelf in the fridge.

JOANNA

You custom-ordered a nameplate for the desk.

MARGARET

Please, Joanna. You're here almost every day too...every day since freshman year.

JOANNA

Because I met my husband here, and now he runs the place. I can justify it.

ROGER

Don't run her out, she's our most loyal patron. (He starts re-shelving books from a rolling cart.)

(Roommates DON, a cheerful, huggable, everyone's-friend type of guy, and JASON, a perky but logical botanist, enter the room.)

JASON

Hey.

JOANNA

Hey fellas.

JASON

We're not here for long...just returning this: Leonard Hannay's *Trees of the Caribbean*. (sincerely) It's really fascinating. (He goes into the next room to drop the book off.)

ROGER (still re-shelving books)

Quiet Jason, people are trying to study. (A glance around the room shows Margaret is stacking books as high as she can, and Joanna, lounging on the couch, is munching from a chip bag.)

DON

Hey Roger! (He gives ROGER a bear hug.)

ROGER

Stop.

DON

How's the library business? (He rubs JOANNA's head affectionately, to her annoyance.)

ROGER

Well, a book was returned yesterday and all the pages were glued together. Deliberately glued together. Someone must be out to get us.

JOANNA

Why are you a librarian again?

(JASON reenters and sits on the executive desk.)

ROGER

It's not for the pay.

JASON (to MARGARET)

Did you know there's a tree in Florida that is so poisonous that if you stand beneath it in the rain, the runoff from the leaves will burn your skin?

MARGARET

Yes, the *manchineel*. Or *manzanilla de la muerte*, meaning "little apple of death." Caribbean natives would tie victims to its trunk so they would die a slow, miserable death.

JOANNA (her mouth full of chips)

You forgot who you were asking.

JASON

People like you are the reason the Encyclopedia Britannica stopped being printed. You already know all the trivia there is to know.

MARGARET

Not yet I don't. But hopefully soon. (She holds up *Mythology*.) This book will get me a little closer.

JOANNA

So Marge, how are your applications coming? You say you want to be a historian—how close are you to actually applying to be one?

MARGARET

I'm working on them.

ROGER

You shouldn't have asked.

JOANNA

How many have you finished?

MARGARET

None.

JOANNA

How many have you started?

MARGARET

Some. (JOANNA glares at her.) None.

JOANNA

(getting the applications out of the desk drawer) You need a job.

MARGARET

I have a job. I like waitressing.

JOANNA

You work at a tearoom that closes at four-thirty, and business is so slow you just sit and read anyway. (She sets the applications on the desk in front of MARGARET.) Do it. Just one, tonight. You'll be here, you have time.

MARGARET

What if I have plans? (with a false air of seduction) With these guys?

(DON and JASON laugh.)

JASON

Us? No.

DON

As a matter of fact...I have a date tonight.

MARGARET

You do?

JOANNA (overlapping)

No!

ROGER (a hair later; with sarcasm)

Really?

MARGARET

Who? The red-head at the Laundromat? (trying to remember her name) Jay, Jay...Jackie. Is it Jackie?

ROGER

Is it Diane from Fresno?

JOANNA

Lisa with the poodles? (to MARGARET; quickly) I bet it's Lisa with the poodles.

DON

Nope...it's Paula Garner.

ROGER

From Cupcake Cranny?

DON

Yes sir.

MARGARET

Impressive. I can't remember the last time you went on a date.

JASON

That's because he's never has.

MARGARET

Really?

ROGER (overlapping)

Never?

JOANNA (overlapping)

That is adorable.

DON

My first date. But it's no big deal.

JASON

You'll be fine.

MARGARET

So why are you dating now?

DON

I didn't plan it. I wasn't looking to date. The opportunity just sort of presented itself. So I'm going with it.

ROGER

Good for you. Best of luck, Don.

DON

Thanks!

JASON

Well we should go get this guy ready for his first date.

MARGARET

Have a good night!

JOANNA

Don't say anything stupid.

DON

Bye!

JASON

'Night, friends. Margaret.

(DON and JASON exit.)

JOANNA

Paula. I believe it. Although I could have sworn it would be Lisa with the poodles. He's played far too many games of fetch with those dogs.

MARGARET

He says it just sort of "happened"? Lucky him.

JOANNA

Hey, the laundromat's around the corner if you're looking for a date yourself.

MARGARET

It's not that. It's just not often that doors open in front of you like that. I wouldn't mind that myself.

ROGER

Door or drawer? (He opens the desk drawer and pulls the applications out.) There's your open drawer. Now get to work.

JOANNA

We'll get out of your hair. I'll see you next week, then?

MARGARET

Sure. Your ultrasound is Tuesday, right?

JOANNA

Right.

MARGARET

So which do you think, boy or girl?

ROGER
Girl. I'm positive.

JOANNA
You have no way of knowing that.

ROGER
It's a gut feeling. I know it.

JOANNA
Alright then, Papa, I'll trust you. (to MARGARET) Don't let this room become your little-death-apple-tree-thing.

MARGARET
Manchineel.

JOANNA
Sure. Fill out that application.

ROGER
Good luck!

JOANNA
Do it!

(ROGER and JOANNA exit. MARGARET sits at the executive desk looking at her book and her applications. Eventually she picks up the applications, folds them neatly, and puts them in the trash. She opens the book and wanders over to the couch. She begins to read.)

(There is a shuffling behind a wall of books. Through the gaps a man in white is seen. He peers through the shelf, looking at MARGARET. He tries to move books out of the way to get a better look, but a few books falls off the shelf. A curious MARGARET, who did not see the man, picks the books up and puts them back. As she tries to rearrange the books the shelves collapse off the bookcase and the books fall to the ground. MARGARET jumps back. The man, THEODOULOS, steps through what was once a bookshelf and enters the library. He is pleasant-looking and confident, and is dressed in a long white toga and sandals.)

THEODOULOS
Sorry about that.

MARGARET (confused)
No, no, it was me. I was rearranging...the books. (She takes a good look at the man and realizes what he's wearing.) Were you spying on me?

THEODOULOS

Spy—? No, I was just...looking at you...through (he looks where the bookshelf used to be) those— (he looks at the pile of books on the ground) those books.

MARGARET

Looking at me?

THEODOULOS

I heard someone say mythology, and that's (he approaches her) kind of up my alley.

MARGARET

Stay back.

(THEODOULOS sees the book in MARGARET'S hands)

THEODOULOS

Oh, *that* mythology. (He approaches her further.)

MARGARET

Stop. Stay where you are.

THEODOULOS

What?

MARGARET

Why are you in a toga?

THEODOULOS

Wha—this? Oh, well, it's what everybody's wearing this season...or a few seasons ago. After a while the decades blur together. (MARGARET stares at him, both confused and suspicious.) Pardon me, let me introduce myself. I'm Theodoulos. (After an awkward beat, THEODOULOS extends his hand. MARGARET doesn't shake it. THEODOULOS begins to wander around the room.) This is a nice library. I've never been here before. I mean, it's no Library of Alexandria, but you have to start somewhere. (He sits on the couch.)

MARGARET

Theodoulos?

THEODOULOS

Theodoulos.

MARGARET

Sounds Greek, which makes sense, given your...apparel.

THEODOULOS

Yep. Theodoulos. It means "slave of god."

And by god, you mean—

MARGARET

THEODOULOS (standing)
Zeus. God above all of Olympus. Wielder of lightning. Master of thunder. Master of...me.

Your master?

MARGARET

Yes.

MARGARET
You know Zeus is a myth, right?

THEODOULOS
If he was, how am I still here?

MARGARET
How old are you?

THEODOULOS
Two-thousand, two-hundred and fifty...six, as of Tuesday two weeks ago. Give or take a decade. Things got iffy during the Black Plague.

MARGARET
How—

THEODOULOS
I got in an argument with Zeus. Because he's Zeus and I'm not, I lost. So here I am, cursed to live as Zeus' slave forever.

MARGARET
You're insane.

THEODOULOS
I've received worse insults.

MARGARET
Get out. Get out of here. (She picks up the lamp on the table and uses it to ward him off.)

THEODOULOS
I'm not crazy. I'm harmless, I really am. Believe me or not, your choice. (MARGARET is about to leave the room, until she sees THEODOULOS sit in her chair at the executive desk.) Comfy.

That's my chair.

MARGARET

Yours?

THEODOULOS

Get out of my chair.

MARGARET

It's a public library.

THEODOULOS

I sit there. That's my seat. See the nameplate? Every day for the past seven years I've sat in that chair. No one else sits there.

MARGARET

So you're a regular here?

THEODOULOS

One could say that.

MARGARET

Got any food? (He digs through the desk drawers, eventually checking in the trashcan. MARGARET becomes more curious about him and is less intimidated.)

THEODOULOS

Some goldfish, maybe. And a few things in the fridge in the back.

MARGARET

What're these?

THEODOULOS (picking up the applications)

Trash.

MARGARET

Job applications. Wow. These are good gigs. Big museums. Hey, there's a vase with my cousin's picture on it in this one. That's a high-class museum. Probably not easy to get into.

MARGARET

That's why they're trash.

THEODOULOS

Are they yours?

MARGARET

Not anymore.

THEODOULOS

Why'd you throw them away?

MARGARET

I didn't feel like applying. No point. I wouldn't get the job.

THEODOULOS

You don't know that for sure until you apply.

MARGARET

I have better things to spend my time on. (holding up *Mythology*) Better books.

THEODOULOS

Funny you're more interested in reading about myths than meeting one.

MARGARET

This isn't my first book on mythology, and I never remember reading your name before, Theodoulos.

THEODOULOS

Call me Ted.

MARGARET (giving him a look)

Ted.

THEODOULOS

You know who you remind me of? With that wavy hair, and those piercing eyes?

MARGARET (intrigued)

Who?

THEODOULOS

Medusa.

MARGARET

Charmed.

THEODOULOS

I knew a guy who met her once...his name was Perseus.

At this point in the story, Theodoulos would retell the myth of Perseus and Medusa in his own words. The story would be acted out as part of Margaret's imagination, with the characters portrayed by her friends who appeared earlier in the plot. Theodoulos would play Perseus, and at the end, he would make Margaret Medusa. The story will make use of the props and set pieces throughout the room, using a lampstand as a sword or a stress ball as an eyeball, etc.

Conclusion

Targeted Market

This play will be marketed first and foremost to Liberty University and other Christian colleges. Although the play is not identifiably Christian, "Mythos" is about the ability to choose, and the most important choice a person can make is to accept the grace of Jesus and follow Him. Thus, I would prefer that it be produced by a venue that understands this founding principle. The play will be supplemented by a playwright's guide that explains and justifies various aspects of the script and provides biblical background for the producing venue. Although I do not find it necessary that the audience understand the underlying biblical themes of the play, I do wish for the producer and director to know the perspective from which this play was created.

Why This Play Will Succeed

The story presented in this play is one that resonates with a wide audience. Its themes of choice and dealing with one's past or future are commonplace across all ages and types of people. The story, although broad in theme, is specific in execution, thus applying itself well to the collegiate demographic. People are faced with decisions

daily—choices that often come with a high risk or high level of discomfort. This play intends to encourage people to make the tough choice, because oftentimes the tough choice is the right choice.

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