



What goes on in the Pantheon!

by John Waterhouse

Cast -

Female 1:-

Artemis – Goddess of the Moon, Hunting and Chastity (*with long hair*).

Karen – A mortal (*with short hair*).

Male 1:-

Apollo – God of Light, Music and Prophecy.

Hermes – God of Commerce, Messenger and Soul Bearer.

Male 2:-

Eros – God of love

Hades – God of the Underworld.

Female 2:-

Eris – Goddess of Chaos and Discord.

Hestia – Goddess of the home and family harmony.

Male 3:-

Zeus – King of the Gods.

Dionysus – God of Wine and Fertility.

Female 3:-

Hera – wife of Zeus.

Aphrodite – Goddess of Love.

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Act One.

Scene One. (Karen, Hermes, Dionysus, Hades, Hestia)

Enter Karen, dressed as Goddess and holding a very large seashell, amidst a sea of dry-ice. She looks around before turning to the audience.

Karen: Greetings, mortals. Welcome to Olympus –home of the Gods. Well, at least some of them are. Some are just Demi-Gods; that means they've got a bit less to boast about; you know; like a rock star with just a cult following. It's a nice way of staying they never really got big. Then there are the Heroes; that doesn't mean like Marvel comic characters; they're mainly mortal men with big egos, big biceps and big.....well; let's say they like to impress. Actually thinking about it, they are a bit like comic characters, some of them. And then there are the Nymphs. How would you describe them? I suppose you'd say they're the sort of girls who usually end with the Heroes; can't think why because they're not usually very heroic and as for what attracts them to the Heroes; it certainly isn't their great...wit and manners! Anyway, we've a few oddities here as well; monsters like three-headed dogs, a couple of Minotaurs, the odd Cyclops. You don't want to mess with any of them, believe me. And then there's little me, a mere mortal. You're wondering what I'd doing here amongst this lot, right? I can show you because I've got an oracle, you see (*hold up shell*). It all started with a funder-raiser I did for a bet! (*talks to shell*) Oh, Oracle; I beseech you to show these good people what happened to me. (*to audience*) The reception does vary a bit so be patient. It was a gift from Poseidon. He's the God of the Sea by the way (*to shell*) Oh, Oracle; I beseech you. Oh, Oracle....(*ephemeral music is heard*) Good, it's working. Here we go...

Dry ice envelopes the stage as the ephemeral music continues.

Dionysus: (*off stage, singing*) 'Twas on the Mount Olympus, and I was still oblivious, the maiden stepped out of the bed, looking quite vivacious'.....Hermes; come over and have a drink!.....No? What others do I know? 'What shall we do with a God from Hades, what she shall we do with...

The fog clears. Artemis is lying asleep on the stage (played by same actress as Karen but with a wig of long hair).

Enter Hermes.

Hermes: Oh, my! What on earth is a mortal doing up here? If Zeus gets to hear about this I'll be fired?

Enter Dionysus.

Dionysus: Is everything alright Hermes?

Hermes: Somehow, a mortal has penetrated the mists that keeps this place from their sight. What am I to do?

Dionysus: It's not your fault, is it?

Hermes: I know that but it's my job to carry souls to Hades. It might look as if I missed one and they ended up here instead!

Dionysus: Well, look, from God to God. If you want to quickly take this one down to Hades, no one else will be any the wiser.

Hermes: Yes, you're right. Thank you, Dionysus.

Dionysus: Just don't leave the portal open, whilst you're away. We don't want anyone wandering in, do we?

Hermes: No, of course not.

Dionysus: (*holds up bottle*) Fancy a drink before you go?

Hermes: Oh, no, no, no thank you. (*picks up Artemis*). I'd best be on my way. (*exits*).

Dionysus: We'll have a drink later then. (*drinks from bottle, looking in direction of Hermes' exit*). Ha, ha. He's forgotten to close the portal. Hope he remembers when he returns.

Dry ice envelopes the stage Enter Karen emerges carrying bulky back-pack.

Karen: I'm not sure this was the best idea, climbing Mount Olympus.

Jane: (*off-stage*) You didn't think it was going to easy, did you?

Karen: No, but I thought it might be a bit warmer. Did we have to do it dressed as Greek Goddess's? We're virtually just wearing sarongs!

Jane: (*off-stage*) And sandals! Anyway, you couldn't think of a better gimmick! It got us the sponsorship didn't it? Now keep going; we've got to keep our part of the bargain.

Karen: (*sits down*) I need to rest for a minute in this God-forsaken place.

Jane: (*off-stage*) God-forsaken? We're now in the heavens; mythological home to the gods and goddesses. Come on, it's not too far now.

Karen: It doesn't seem very heavenly to me. Look, you go on and I'll catch you up in a minute.

Jane: (*off-stage*): Alright but don't rest too long. See you in a few minutes

Karen: (*to herself*) And to think I'm on holiday! (*Dry ice starts to fill the stage*). What's happening? Jane, can you hear me? Jane? (*Out of the fog, enter Dionysus, slumping on stage holding a bottle and a flagon*).

Dionysus: Artemis! Where have you been?

Karen: I've not been anywhere.....hang on; who are you?

Dionysus: You've been missed. No one had any idea where you'd gone. (*looks closely*) And you've cut your hair. What have you been hunting?

Karen: I'm not been hunting anything!

Dionysus: Artemis; you're the Goddess of the Hunt! Is it some secret, divine quest which took you away?

Karen: What? I think you've made a mistake. My name's Karen; I don't know anyone called Artemis.

Dionysus: (*laughs*) You can tell that to the others! You think you can pretend to be a mortal just adopting a mortal name and cutting your hair? Come on. (*points flagon at Karen*). Although I admit you look a little like a mortal with that hairstyle. You weren't hoping to get off with a mortal were... (*slumps toward Karen, who pushes him away*).

Karen: What? I think you're drunk.

Dionysus: (*laughs*) Of course, I am. How do you think I got the job of being the God of Wine?

Karen: If you'll excuse me, I seem to have lost my friend!

Exit Karen.

Dionysus: (*laughs*) She's Artemis, all right. I'd always recognise that strop at the suggestion of a bit of.....entertainment!

Enter Hermes.

Dionysus: That was quick.

Hermes: I know. I wanted to get rid of the body before anyone noticed. Hades can deal with the soul.

Ephemeral music is heard as the stage fills with mist. Karen appears, dressed fully as a Goddess as before.

Karen: And that's how it happened. It turns out that the Gods really do live on top of Olympus! Ever since Zeus made a decree over two thousand years ago; he's the main guy by the way, they've kept themselves away from us mortals because they've enough problems of their own to sort out. Apparently mortals just tended to cause complications. As for me, I told them over and over that my name is Karen but they're just ended up thinking a memory curse had been placed upon me; it seems Gods can sometimes do that kind of thing to each other! And as for Artemis, whom I apparently closely resemble, well, no one's seen her for ages so I appear to be stuck here even though, I'm engage to James, who's a champion by the way! And there's no way I can tell him what's happened! (*Enter Hermes.*) Oh, no; it's Hermes; he's the local delivery boy. That's all we need.

Hermes: I bring you a message, Artemis.

Karen: How nice. And pray, who doth send me a message?

Hermes: It's from Apollo. He asked me to tell that tonight is the premier of his latest piece and he's got a back stage pass for you.

Karen: Oh, he didst, didst he? Well thank his for me and yes, I'll be delighted.

Hermes: Certainly; he will be so pleased. Good bye.

Exit Hermes.

Karen: *(to audience)* I can't really say no because Apollo is the brother of Artemis and since I've got to keep pretending to be her, I'll have to turn up. By the way, I've learned that up here amongst the Gods, it doesn't matter if you're brother and sister, you can still have romantic relationships so I need to keep at a distance at the same time; it's all very complicated! *(smoke fills the back and clear to reveal Hades sat with a chess set, which he is setting up)*. Gosh; where did you spring from?

Hades: I'm sorry if I startled you, my dear!

Karen: Who are you?

Hades: Oh, just a passing visitor you might say.

Karen: I didn't think they got many visitors here.

Hades: They don't. I've not been here.....for some time. Won't you join me?

Karen: Do you normally just hang around looking for people to chess with?

Hades: No, but I don't normally visit Olympus.

Karen: But it does seem a bit melodramatic, sat waiting for strangers to play chess!

Hades: Well it worked on Max Von Sydow in in the Seventh Seal. You realise who I am?

Karen: We've not met before, have we? *(sits with him)*.

Hades: We might have done. Now who do you remind of?

Karen: I can't think.....some Goddess?

Hades: Of course. I didn't think you were a Nymph *(eyeing her)* although I don't know! But which Goddess? You wouldn't be Artemis by any chance?

Karen: I might be.

Hades: Ah, but of course. I had heard you'd er.....disappeared.

Karen: Oh, just a rumour, I assure you.

Hades: Yes, I'm sure. You know, I've a mind to take you back with.....(*Enter Hermes*) The Messenger! Looks like you've got mail.....Artemis.

Hermes: No, I'm afraid not. I have a message for you, Hades.

Karen: You're Hades? Not the God of the Underworld?

Hades: Oh, didn't I say. I don't usually announce myself, until such time as when I'm usually...least expected!

Karen: Oh, no! You don't mean...?

Hades: Don't worry yourself, my dear. I don't come here to take away Gods. Now, of your message, Hermes?

Hermes: Zeus himself commands you to go to him immediately and explain why you've come to Olympus.

Hades: Damn. I knew news of my arrival would get to his ears sooner or later. You must forgive me Artemis but we will have to continue the game some other time.

Karen: I didn't realise we'd started playing.

Hades: Oh, but I think we had! (*to Hades*). All right, damn you, let's go and see the big man, and to hell with his impudence!

Exit Hades and Hermes.

Karen: What an odd character!

Enter Dionysus

Dionysus: I heard all that. I'd watch him if I was you.

Karen: Oh, hello Dionysus. Do you know that man?

Dionysus: The God of the Underworld, no less. And if he's come up here, he must have a very good reason, risking the wrath of Zeus. He abducted Persephone, you know and kept her hidden until Zeus commanded him to return her but then he tricked Zeus didn't he?

Karen: What happened?

Dionysus: Oh, they ended up with a time-share arrangement with her; nine months on Olympus, three months in the house of Hades.

Karen: Hmm. Well, no one's going to time-share me.

Dionysus: I'm sure. Fancy a drink?

Karen: I think I do, after meeting him. (*Dionysus pours her a flagon*). Thanks.

Dionysus: Bottoms up.

Karen: I hope not. (*drinks*). Cheers. Hey, that's got quite a kick.

Dionysus: Yeah, selected it myself (*pours Karen some more*).

Karen: I'd never had guessed. (*drinks*).

Dionysus: Well, I am the God of the vine and the grape, you know (*drinks*). And I love a good grape. (*puts arm around Karen*).

Karen: (*pushes Dionysus away*). Well don't think you're going to grape me. (*drinks*). Although this is pretty good stuff!

They continue laughing and drinking until Dionysus put his arm around her and Karen responds. Enter Hestia.

Hestia: Artemis, what are doing?

Karen: Having a good grape. I mean I'm.... Does it matter? (*drinks*).

Hestia: Dionysus! Unhand that maiden!

Karen: Maiden? What does she take me for?

Hestia: Have you forgotten your vow Artemis, that no man should lay upon you.....so much as a finger?

Karen: (*to Dionysus*) Did I make such a vow?

Dionysus: Yeah, I'm afraid you did. You are the Goddess of Chastity.....amongst other things.

Karen: I am?

Hestia: And she's going to stay that way! (*pulls Karen up by the hand*). Come with me, my girl. (*to Dionysus*) And you, oh vile maiden defiler.....

Dionysus: Come on, you miserable old boot! We only had a few drinks, oh Goddess of Prudery!

Hestia: I happen to be the Goddess of the Home.....and the Hearth!

Dionysus: **The Hearth, eh?** Well, if you need someone to stoke your fire....

Hestia: May Zeus blast you for that, lecherous one! (*to Karen*) Come along.

Exit Karen and Hestia.

Dionysus: Oh well, you can't win 'em all. Cheers. (*slumps off stage*).

