

Wake Up, Ares.

"She read the play and decided to write a fairy tale herself."

From the conversation, heard by the author in a café
across from the New York Public Library.

The three-act play

CHARACTERS:

Ares, god of war

Aphrodite, goddess of love and beauty, the wife of Ares

Hermes, god of commerce and the boss of thieves

Clotho, moire, the spinner of fates

CHARACTERS, LEFT BY THE AUTHOR BEHIND THE SCENES:*Olympian deities*

Apollo, god of the sun, of light, of music and art.

Artemis, virgin goddess, the patron saint of hunting

Athena, goddess of war strategy and craft.

Dionysus, god of vine, drunkenness and ecstasy.

Hephaestus, god of fire, first husband of Aphrodite, the patron saint of
craftsmen

Hades, the king of the underworld and the dead

Poseidon, god of the sea, in the presentation of the author, the pedagogue of
Aphrodite

Zeus, god of heaven

The gods who were considered the children of Ares and Aphrodite

Anteros, god of hate

Deimos, spirit of fear and terror

Phobos, spirit of panic and rout

Eros, god of love

Harmony, goddess of harmony and harmony, according to the author, is not yet born

Primordial deities

Atropos, moire, the implacable, cutting the strings of fate

Prometheus, titan, the transmitter of fire

Tartarus, god of the darkest and deepest part of hell

Uranos, god of heaven, the grandfather of Zeus

Muses

Clio, muse of history

Cephisso, daughter of Apollo, according to the author, muse of the arts, the servant of Aphrodite

Mortals who became immortals

Asclepios, doctor, the son of Apollo

Heracles, famous hero, the son of Zeus

Pan, god of nature to form, according to the author, the son of Ares

Simple and non-simple mortals

Adonis, the beloved of Aphrodite

Alexander the Great

Amazons, inhabitants of the Black Inhospitable Sea coast

Botticelli, author of the paintings "The Portrait of a Young Woman," "Venus and Mars," and "The Birth of Venus," mentioned in the play

Helen of Troy, the wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta

Cycnos, son of Ares and princess Pirene

Leonidas, king of Sparta, according to the author, the ancestor of Heracles.

Louis XIV, King of France

Lycurgus, king of the Adonians of Thrace, the son of Ares

Marilyn Monroe, actress

Michelangelo, author of the bas-relief sculpture "The Battle of the Centaurs," the drawing "Venus and Cupid," the sculpture "Pietà," and the statues "Dawn" and "Night," mentioned in the play

Odysseus, king of Ithaca, grandson of Hermes

Paris, youngest son of Priam, the King of Troy

Pirene, a daughter of Bebryx, king of narbonnais, the paramour of Ares and beloved of Heracles

Queen of Saba, of Northern Ethiopia, mentioned in biblical accounts

Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome, the children of Ares and the vestal Rhea Sylvia

Segal Erich, professor of ancient Greek literature, screenwriter of the film "Love Story"

Spartacus, gladiator of Thracian origin

Location and date of action: August 4 and 5, 1962, New York City.

Act I. Scene 1.

The evening in the city apartment. In the center of the room, on the large table, Aphrodite is ironing the curtains. A phone call.

APHRODITE: Hello. Hermes? Why, I'm always waiting for you. Yes, he's at home. Watches TV or sleep. He's in the next room. The mood? That looks pretty good. No, no, last time - not. I think so. How do you come now? From the cabin at the street corner? Well, go upstairs.

ARES (*A voice from the next room.*): Who was that?

APHRODITE: Your old friend.

ARES: Clotho?

APHRODITE: Not.

ARES: I don't have other friends anymore.

APHRODITE: Then your old enemy.

ARES: Which one of them? (*Disheveled Ares enters the room, wearing a short bathrobe and slippers.*)

ARES: Then...

APHRODITE: Hermes.

ARES: Hermes? What does he want?

APHRODITE: To talk to you.

ARES: When?

APHRODITE: Right now. He's already on his way up.

ARES: What a mess! And I'm in that form. Wait, I need a minute to freshen up...

Ares goes to the bathroom. The doorbell.

APHRODITE (*cries*): It's open.

Hermes, a gentleman from Wall Street, appears.

HERMES: Do you leave the door open? Not afraid? Specifically in this neighborhood?

APHRODITE: And who should the Olympic gods fear? Only the same Olympians. And they don't live in such neighborhoods. Judging by you. Champs Elysees, Strand, Long Island?

HERMES: A little bit of everything. And you, I see, you've become the housewife. The goddess of beauty irons the sheets.

APHRODITE: First, not sheets, but the curtains. Besides, it's better to iron the sheets than to caress the sticky male asses on them.

HERMES: Wow, we've become very demanding on men?

APHRODITE: No, on the asses. Something to drink? There is no wine.

HERMES: And what about beer?

APHRODITE: That's a lot. Please, take it in the fridge. (*Hermes takes a can of beer from the fridge.*) It seems that we met not so long ago.

HERMES: Yes. According to the local terms - half a century ago. Just at the beginning of the First-Ares-Free War.

APHRODITE: Look, is it with your pitch this ridiculous chronology runs between us? The era of the First-Ares-Free War, the era of the Second-Ares-Free War, huh?

HERMES (*opens a can*): With mine.

APHRODITE: I guessed. Once I spoke on the phone with Clio, and she told me that she had already added this chronology to her modern history. I asked her - what are you? And she answered - everybody's been talking like that for a long time. What a great event you've found!

HERMES: Honey, in terms of nothing-happens of that time, your husband's refusal to participate in the war is a global event.

ARES: Who commemorates the name of the great Ares here?

Ares comes in. He has carefully combed his hair and taken the luxury pajamas with a soft plaid on.

ARES: Well, there's our great comme-maire-saint! (*Hermes gets up*). Please don't!

They sit on the chairs at the coffee table.

ARES: How are you? But why to talk for nothing? Come right now. What do you want from me?

HERMES: Wait a minute. Just for the beginning, I'm sorry I woke you up, or did I draw you away from the TV?

ARES: I didn't do either, actually. I was laying on the bed, looking at the local magazines. There is an incredible selection of photos of this pretty girl. With the skirt blown by the wind.

HERMES: Ah...

ARES: If once I go outside (*looks at Aphrodite*), I will definitely meet her. So what brought you to me?

HERMES: You.

ARES: What's about me?

HERMES: We, Olympians, have recently met...

ARES: Who are we, Olympians? You and your boyfriend Dionysus? Look at these Olympians.

HERMES: Athena was with us.

Aphrodite raises her head and stops ironing. She gets a look inside the fridge, then takes a chair, puts it in front of the coffee table, and gives a can of beer to Ares.

ARES: Thank you, darling. And Hephaustos (*laughs*) was not with you? You can, on occasion, say my thanks to him and his craftsmen. These new cans (*opens the beer*) are just a miracle.

HERMES: Hephaestos, he was not.

ARES (*reluctantly*): So, Athena. What have you said about me?

HERMES: Asclepios was also with us.

ARES: The immortal Asclepios? He helped me a lot after Alexander's Indian campaign. I can even say that he got me back on my feet. I invite him from time to time. Aphrodite has migraines. (*Aphrodite raises his eyebrows with surprise.*)

HERMES: He is not interested in Aphrodite's migraines, but in your well-being.

ARES: I am fine.

HERMES: No, I don't think so.

ARES: And where did you meet? Was it on Olympus itself?

HERMES: It doesn't matter. Athena started the conversation. Now it's a very difficult time for her. She cannot justly end any war. Because wars are out of control. Your control.

APHRODITE: Hermes, Ares doesn't want to fight anymore. You can tell that Athena.

ARES: Yes, you can tell that her.

HERMES: Yes, Asclepios said that you had lost the taste for war and that it might be a matter of age.

ARES: Of age?

HERMES: Yes, even we all get older.

APHRODITE: Judging by you, no.

HERMES: Aphrodite, appearance, that's not all. Then Dionysus, who could offer this, said: perhaps we should look for a new god of war?

ARES (*laughs*): Ha, look, look.

APHRODITE: Hermes, you're talking nonsense. Ares cannot be replaced.

HERMES: I told them that, too. I also agreed with Asclepius that you had lost the taste for war. But, as Athena needs justice, I suggested something completely different. And I promised to ask you to do it.

ARES: And what did our old devious liar promise them?

HERMES: Ares, no insult, please. I told them the following: while Ares had lost his taste for war, but we need just wars, let us ask Ares to prevent an unjust war.

ARES: To prevent a war?

APHRODITE: What war? How?

HERMES: Just before that, I visited Clotho. She told me that Atropos was sharpening a great sword, that time much greater than the sword of the Second War without you. Clotho slowly passed her hand through the threads and said -- I'm afraid that, at this wheel, everything will be cut here.

APHRODITE: Clotho - it's serious.

HERMES: Well, I'm not going to lie - she's the one who suggested I talk to you. She said you were the only one who could stop Atropos.

ARES: But how? To talk to Atropos? How do you imagine that? For thousands of years, she was sharpening the scissors according to my orders and now I'm going to tell her - shove your sword in a deep? Do you know what she's answering to me? Where in a deep? In your ass, Ares?

HERMES: Talking about asses - has it become your tradition at home?

ARES: When the whole world is a big ass, there's nothing wrong with talking about it at home. Don't worry, your ass we won't touch today.

APHRODITE: Ares, let him go on.

HERMES: There's another way. I inquired in my circles. Tomorrow we're waiting for a party. The serious party. For businessmen, who are heard by the

government. You just have to come there in the uniform of a colonel (*Ares is getting up*), sorry, a general, to have fun there, and to say a few words to someone, I will show you to whom, and leave. Without dwelling on whiskey and poker, so as not to give them time to ask unnecessary questions.

ARES: I don't know how to play poker.

HERMES: In a week, other people will meet these people (*He looks at the watches.*). Forgive me; I really have very little time. And so, in two or three steps, in a few weeks, the information will reach the top. And there will be no war.

ARES: Look, why don't you go to work to, how it's called, ah, Hollywood? Now they need stories like hotcakes. Recently, they even made a movie about Spartacus.

APHRODITE: What Spartacus? The Thrace?

ARES (*does not want to respond to Aphrodite*). And there's good money to be made. Why can't you say it yourself? Above all, that you, if I understood correctly, will you be there?

HERMES: Thanks to you, there are still people on earth who respect the epaulets. And me - just a lucky businessman. One of many.

ARES: And how am I going to introduce myself?

HERMES: Where you're going, nobody is introduced. All you have to do is be invited. We will enter at the very moment when they are looking for someone who can answer the question, only one that interests them now.

ARES: Ah... (*He opens the box on the table, takes a cigar, starts kneading it and shows the cigar to Hermes.*) Cuba, huh?

HERMES: Yes, Cuba. They just come there to say hello and ask that question. I'm quietly going out to divert the attention of someone who can really ask you who you are and where you come from. I'll have something for him tonight, so he'll even cross the threshold of this club.

ARES: So it's going to be a club? Football? Baseball?

HERMES: Ares, that's so stupid guy you have to show tomorrow.

ARES: Hermes, you said yourself - no insult.

HERMES: I'm sorry. The fact is that these people (*with a bitter smile*) don't like smart guys.

APHRODITE: Ares, wait. Hermes, I know you very well. I'm willing to believe you if you tell me honestly what is your interest in this case. Otherwise, get out of here. Because it's a provocation. I don't know either from the part of Athena or Dionysus, but it is a provocation.

HERMES: Aphrodite, you become wiser than Athena. Even she didn't ask me that question.

APHRODITE: Athena doesn't know you like I do. Speak!

HERMES: Good. I could start with a history of economic cycles, but I will be brief. The world is waiting for another industrial revolution, and it will be raised by a young man who will invent, how to explain it, a TV set, with the screen where you can draw. Anything. The gardens of Arcadia, the coast of Crete. Ares, you can replay the Trojan War and finally beat Athena.

ARES: To beat Athena? On TV?

APHRODITE: On TV? That's absurd.

HERMES: No, darling, it is not absurd. I kept this guy's thread in my arms; I felt it, I read it. And it is put on the wheel that stands at the exit of the room of Atropos. If you don't believe me, ask Clotho yourself.

APHRODITE: So we're waiting for Clotho, too? Ares, I can't listen to this nonsense anymore. I'd rather go and prepare something. Just in case. Clotho, she is not like Hermes, she does not go to restaurants. She prefers a home-cooked meal. (*She leaves for the kitchen. And already from the kitchen*) Yes, Ares, and do not smoke, please, your cigars. Clotho, if, of course, she comes, does not tolerate its smoke.

HERMES: (*look at the open kitchen door and in a low voice*). Ares, this is your chance. I know you lost your taste for war when people started using these weapons - gas and nuclear bomb.

ARES (*gloomily*): And why do they need me if they have a bomb?

HERMES: That's right. And if you stop this nuclear war, people will accept themselves not to use the bomb. Athena swore that would be the case. Wars will go the same way they used to. And men will still need you. Think. Our meeting tomorrow, at the party, at six o'clock. At nine o'clock I will already wait for you here. If you don't come to the party, it will mean that the deal is not done. If you're late for the return, it will mean you've failed. Simmer down, there, the god of war. (*aloud*) So you'll think? Will you talk to Clotho? So, see you tomorrow. (*aloud again*) See you tomorrow, Aphrodite.

APHRODITE (*from the kitchen*): See you tomorrow.

HERMES (*still in a low voice*): And the last one. If you want to get that girl with a bloated skirt, hurry up. I was holding her thread. It was very skinny. It should have torn like that. If not today, then tomorrow. Why, I'll give you an extra hour. At the party at six o'clock and here at ten o'clock. I have very little time, but I still have a lot to prepare.

Hermes leaves.

ARES: Hold on. And...

Scene 2.

The curtain stays open. Aphrodite enters.

APHRODITE: Whether there will be a war or not it is not our concern. But there's one positive thing about this ridiculous story - you're at least going to ventilate yourself. You haven't left the house in twelve years.

ARES: Look, it's like a hurricane. He swooped, tore off all the roofs, and flew away. What's wrong with him?

APHRODITE: I don't know.

ARES: Look, maybe he just missed you? And he made up this whole story to spend a couple of hours with you while I'm not home?

APHRODITE: Ares ...

ARES: I'm joking. It's funny. To turn into a recluse, to watch football, and expect someone else to need you. And here you are! Hermes! Although, you know,

before I met you, he had bothered me with such requests. Where there was a war, there were prices for the harvest. But today ... There's something other. Someone else wants me to wake up.

APHRODITE: Maybe you really should talk to Clotho?

ARES: Aphrodite, you are immensely generous today. What if Clotho came up with all this? To see me? She will come and frighten you with some star-crossed love, say, of that girl with a bloated skirt, you will rush to settle it, and Clotho will stay with me.

APHRODITE: And you are immensely generous today. On fantasy. It seems to me that it is not you, but Hermes can take a break from business. Let it feed your male ego, but Clotho is the only woman I can leave alone with you.

ARES: I know. She is my only and true friend.

APHRODITE: And mine. It's strange, we have lived with you such a stormy, such a long full life, and as a friend, we have acquired a simple keeper of destinies. That we see only once in a hundred years.

ARES: That's why we didn't make friends because our life was too busy. And if only once in a hundred years that's correct. When it gets very lonely at night, I turn to you and begin to listen to your measured breathing. I listen to it and fall asleep. And if I start tossing and turning, then I stop hearing from you. And then I can only think about Clotho. I can send her a telegram, make a phone call, no, of course, just call - Clotho! - and she will come to me. And with this thought, I fall asleep. The wealth of life is not in action but in the ability to do it. Do you know how many times she ...

APHRODITE: Ares, let's not stir up the past. The evening already happens to be restless. But if you really want to see Clotho, call her.

ARES: Call or to make a call?

APHRODITE: Call.

ARES: Are you secretly expecting she won't hear me? That I've really become anemic old man?

APHRODITE: And you, aren't you afraid of the same? And that's why you haven't bothered Clotho for decades. To make a call means immediately to admit your failure. Have you heard (*mimics*), Ares is already calling by phone? And to call, it's scary - if she doesn't hear?

ARES: Yes, Hermes is right. You are becoming wiser than Athena.

APHRODITE: It's easy near you.

ARES: But you remain as cruel as before.

APHRODITE: Did you think I would prescribe a sedative for you? Like Asclepios? No dear. But I'll tell you something else. If you do decide to go to this party, leave the house in the morning. Then you can go to your football during the day.

ARES: Really?

APHRODITE: Why not? Just look, behave yourself there. After all, you will be in the uniform of a general.

ARES: Can I see live football again? What a fool Hermes is. To seduce me with a game of Trojan War on TV! When I've already hated this box. You know, I'm going to this party. If Clotho is right, then I can save more than just this Hermes' guy. But also boys who play football. Afro, thank you. (*shouts*) Clotho! Clotho!

Clotho appears inaudibly in the room with a spinning wheel behind her back.

CLOTHO: Did you call me, Ares?

The curtain.

Act II. Scene 1.

Ares, Aphrodite, and Clotho are seating at the table in the same room.

CLOTHO: Thanks so much for dinner, but let's get down to business.

APHRODITE: Come on without me. I'm going to sleep.

CLOTHO: Aphrodite, aren't you interested in the fate of people? There is one star-crossed love ...

APHRODITE: Not anymore. (*goes into the bedroom.*)

CLOTHO: She has changed a lot.

ARES: Yeah, she became such a good hostess. Washes clothes, goes shopping.

CLOTHO: And buys you a beer?

ARES: But no, the beer I'm buying myself. By phone, with a delivery.

CLOTHO: And me, going up here, I was surprised - why are there such (*chuckles quietly*), sorry, worn-out steps at the stairs to these hermits?

ARES: Clotho, what is left for me when people don't need me? For thousands of years, I have honed my skill, which today can be destroyed by the touch of a button.

CLOTHO: Maybe this is a payment for your former pride?

ARES: Stop it. Tell me also that some craftsmen invented the bomb with the pitch of Hephaestus. To get revenge on Ares.

CLOTHO: Maybe. But your pride, it is hurt not by this, huh?

ARES: By what?

CLOTHO: You are tormented by the fact that in every capital of this mortal world there is the Field of Mars but boys play football on it.

Ares (*holding up a cigar*): May I? You won't be bothered by tobacco smoke? (*Lights up a cigar.*) Thank you. Clotho, how long time no see? A hundred years? Then there was still no football. And the TV even more so. You just don't know how I spend my time. Do you think I want to help Hermes? (*Gets up and starts walking around the room*) I called you because maybe I can save the lives of boys who play the ball on the Champ de Mars. The field of Mars is a battlefield. The ball game is a battle. So where else to play it, if not on the Champ de Mars! Do you remember how we held the thread of the Sun King's life on his twentieth birthday? How you told him, that after his death the esplanade in front of the hospital for his veterans would become a ball court. Do you remember what he answered?

CLOTHO: I remember.

ARES: And?

CLOTHO: He said, "So I will not live my life for nothing. Give me a horse!"

ARES: Here! A mere mortal, but turned out to be more perspicacious than us, the eternal gods.

CLOTHO: He was not a mere mortal.

ARES: Let it be so. But what was given to the son of Apollo should be available to me too! And if the boys chase the ball on his esplanade, then let them chase it on my field too! Clotho, you are a woman, you cannot understand. This is not the dishonor. This is a reward.

CLOTHO: And Aphrodite?

ARES: What about Aphrodite? She supports me. She even allowed me to go to football tomorrow.

CLOTHO: That's not what I mean. Are you happy with her?

ARES: Why are you asking that?

CLOTHO: You don't know a lot. And...

ARES: My dear, my faithful Clotho. Now ordinary female jealousy will be speaking inside you, but I don't want to listen to her. I only want to listen to you. Show me the thread of this boy that Hermes is so worried about (*puts the cigar in the ashtray*).

Ares and Clotho are looking at the threads.

CLOTHO: This one. You know, it's gotten much stronger.

ARES: You see. Because I have already decided. And this one, who's that?

CLOTHO: He just might become a great athlete ...

ARES: Okay. And this one?

CLOTHO: Also.

ARES: Oh, and this thread, it's so skinny. It will be torn soon.

CLOTHO: This is the thread of one poor girl. The famous actress.

Ares (*thoughtfully runs his finger along this thread. Then, as if waking up, feigned*): Well, girls are not interesting for us, so that's probably all. Wait, one more. This one with such a fancy pattern.

CLOTHO: When I spun it, I remembered the old days. This is the thread of a professor of ancient Greek literature, an admirer of Homer.

ARES: Really?

Aphrodite enters.

APHRODITE: Are you still sitting?

ARES: Aphrodite, imagine we found the thread of the life of a professor of ancient Greek literature.

Aphrodite (*opening the bathroom door*): So meet him and tell him how it really was (*closes the door*).

ARES: I'm afraid he won't understand. Okay (*mocks cheerfully*), I'm going to bed.

Ares leaves for another room.

Scene 2.

Aphrodite leaves the bathroom and sits down next to Clotho.

Aphrodite (*twisting threads*): You know, I can spin too. But one day Athena found me at the spinning wheel and made a terrible scandal.

CLOTHO: Aphrodite, that star-crossed love ...

Aphrodite (*picks up the thread and wiggles it slightly*): Will she help Ares?

CLOTHO: If only she tears up her own thread herself. Then the sorrow of her love will become stronger than any words ...

APHRODITE: Let it be so (*releases the thread*). Athena rebuked me for encroaching on her art and the patronage of the craft. Yes, I encroached. And not on her art but on yours. Sorry, then I just wanted to spin the thread of life of poor Adonis. But it didn't work out.

CLOTHO: Why?

APHRODITE: Athena broke the spinning wheel and Adonis' thread was torn.

CLOTHO: People said then that he was killed by Ares who had turned into a boar.

APHRODITE: No, Ares was then, as always, at war. That boar was a common boar.

CLOTHO: I wouldn't say so.

APHRODITE: At first I thought it was the envy of our ever-hungry virgin Artemis. Once, at the walls of Troy, I caught her gaze, fixed on Paris. Then she looked at Helen. And the fire of passion, burning a moment ago in her eyes, was enveloped by the ice of such deep contempt. "Poor girl, - I thought, - why did I instill your love in you?" At that moment, it really seemed to me that I was right that that boar was sent by Artemis.

CLOTHO: Did you ask her?

APHRODITE: No.

CLOTHO: Why?

APHRODITE: Because after Helen she looked at me. And our eyes met.

CLOTHO: Did her eyes tell you something?

APHRODITE (*grins*): They did. Yes, they burned with hatred. But not only did they burn. Hatred poured out of them and flowed into me like fiery lava, like the seed of Hephaestus on our wedding night ...

CLOTHO: You mean ...

APHRODITE: Yes, shortly after the fall of Troy, I gave birth to Anteros. So Anteros, although the entire Olympus considered the dates, was also not the son of Ares.

CLOTHO (*pretends not to hear the last phrase*): Hephaestus could not forgive your infidelity.

APHRODITE: Artemis was a toy in his hands. I can imagine with what gloating Hephaestus told her about the appearance of Adonis in my life. Hephaestus could not forgive my infidelity, but he hated Ares even more.

Hephaestus and Artemis needed Adonis alive, not dead. Do you know what was the sweetest moment in Hephaestus's life?

CLOTHO: Don't tell me that was your wedding night.

APHRODITE: Of course not.

CLOTHO: When did he catch you and Ares, naked, in a golden net and put you up for the fun of the other gods?

APHRODITE: Not even that. The greatest delight in the life of Hephaestus was the arrival of Ares himself, humbly asking for help.

CLOTHO: Was that?

APHRODITE: Yes. You know, on the rare days of peace, Ares never missed games. Once, as always, he disguised himself as a gladiator in order to participate in battles. Not far from his Eternal City, in Pompeii ... I waited for him on the evening of the next day, and he returned the same night. Dionysus (*grins*) had to jump out the window. Ares said that on the eve of the games, gladiators, instead of preparing for battle, indulge in debauchery with rich patrician women. And there, in the night, in moments of relaxation from the rampage of flesh, they play dice on who will be killed tomorrow. So that in the morning, instead of a fight, to show to the audience a performance.

CLOTHO: Great Zeus!

APHRODITE: Ares went to Hephaestus with a request to punish that crazy city. I do not know how they spoke, but the laughter of Hephaestus made even Poseidon shudder in the depths of the Aegean Sea. And then this laughter escaped from Vesuvius and covered the city with ashes ...

CLOTHO: I remember that day. Atropos' movements, they are usually dimensional. Even when your husband was at war, she only made the scissors move faster. And that day she went to my spinning wheel and cut all the threads with a short sword at once.

Pause.

CLOTHO: I've always known that Ares is not who we see him as. But to go to Hephaestus ...

APHRODITE: Do you still love him? Sorry.

CLOTHO: Why, after all these years...

APHRODITE: No, really, I'm sorry. After all, I should be very grateful to you. You always knew everything - about him, about me.

CLOTHO: As you can see, not all.

APHRODITE: Tell me. You could come to him and tell him about me – everything; that children, whom he considers his own is not from him, but from drunkard Dionysus or from sneak Hermes. Or from random mortals.

CLOTHO: Adonis was not random.

APHRODITE: Let it be so. I know Ares gave up to Athena under the walls of Troy in gratitude for that broken spinning wheel. Why didn't you do it? Why didn't you tell him about me? After all, today you could be in my place.

CLOTHO: You have lived together for so many years, and you still don't know each other. How could Ares give up to Athena in gratitude for killing some mortal? You didn't hear what I told you. The boar was indeed a common boar, but Adonis himself was not accidental. It was what they, people, outside the windows of this huge city call as your cross. You carry it all your life. Here is my love also is my cross. So forgive me.

APHRODITE: You? For what?

CLOTHO: Because I stumbled today.

APHRODITE (*looks closely into Clotho's eyes*): But you, you didn't fall?

Long silence. Finally, Clotho tosses the spinning wheel behind her back like a bag.

CLOTHO: Stay with him. And fare you well.

Clotho leaves.

The light turns off.

Scene 2.

The curtain stays open. Aphrodite continues to sit at the table. It's dawn outside the window.

Ares enters.

ARES (*singing*): Thunder of victory, ring out ... Honey, you got up already, so early?

APHRODITE: I wanted to see you off. Coffee?

ARES: Be so kind. And I, can you imagine, slept so profoundly that I did not even hear your breathing.

APHRODITE: It's good that you slept. You are having a hard day.

ARES: Ha. Hard day - football and the party (*goes to the bathroom*).

Aphrodite slowly prepares breakfast.

APHRODITE: It's strange, yesterday everyone was discussing Ares so hotly, but no one remembered that I also retired. The most interesting thing is that I myself was the first not to remember this. Because I was thinking about Ares all the time.

(*Ares' voice from the bathroom*) Are you telling me something?

APHRODITE (*shouts*): Coffee is ready. And I want to take a bath.

ARES: I'm coming.

Ares walks out, drying himself hastily with a towel, and disappears into the room.

APHRODITE: Even muses do not bother me, because among artists and sculptors I have long gone out of fashion. People fight as they want and love as they want. And whoever they want. Of course, when it comes to a fateful couple, then people cannot do without me. Only such couples, fateful for the world, are becoming less and less. Or maybe it's for the best, otherwise, I'm like a bootmaker without boots.

ARES (*enters in whites*): Which boots? Darling, it's summer, and in this army, they wear shoes in summer. Look here (*twists his leg*).

APHRODITE: How irresistible you are. This uniform suits you so well.

ARES: Only very uncomfortable.

APHRODITE: Let me straighten your collar. (She straightens his collar and puts her hands on Ares's shoulders.) Come back, please. Come back, I will wait. And I beg you, I beg you – don't take too long.

ARES: Afro, what are you? You never saw me off to war like that.

APHRODITE: This is also a war. Another war.

ARES: With whom? Darling, you were overtired yesterday and got up early. Take a bath and go to bed. I'll be on time.

Ares leaves quickly.

APHRODITE: And coffee?

The curtain.

Act III. Scene 1.

The same room. Aphrodite is ironing the curtains. Hermes enters.

HERMES: Aphrodite, hello.

APHRODITE: Oh, it's you. I thought my husband was back.

HERMES: Is he not yet? We agreed to meet here at ten o'clock.

APHRODITE: As you can see, no.

HERMES: Strange. A few minutes to talk. The way back. He should have returned long ago.

APHRODITE: You calculated everything so accurately. As in past years. Honestly, I thought yesterday that you would take advantage of this and come earlier. Wait, you know where Ares might have been.

HERMES: At football, I think. And you, did you want to see me earlier?

APHRODITE: I don't know, probably not. After all, you yourself proposed once to end our relationship. I was so surprised then, but I thought and realized that they became dis-ad-van-ta-geous for you. You didn't feel unexpectedly ashamed in front of Ares, did you?

HERMES: Why not?

APHRODITE: I can believe anything but this. You know, Hermes, I often remember our past days. Don't you think they give off some kind of emptiness? Tall grass, a tent, wine, pleasure ... What have we spent our youth on?

HERMES: On these same pleasures. When you can still get them, if not in youth.

APHRODITE: Unfortunately, you're right.

HERMES: Why, unfortunately?

APHRODITE: I could, like Athena, learn a craft. An artistic craft, so as not to affect her pride. At least, she was able to share the patronage of craftsmen with Hephaestus. And then to develop this craft, to raise masters, to create with them.

HERMES: You did with them.

APHRODITE: Yes, posed nude. A great glory.

HERMES: Do you lack glory? You are the goddess of love; your power over people is greater than the power of dozens of Athens. The Muses of Art are your servants, given to you by Apollo.

APHRODITE: Oh, you know I'm jealous of them. What am I? Muses came to me and asked permission for one or another - artist, sculptor or poet - to reproduce my image. And I, basking in the rays of the morning sun, without even getting up from the bed, lazily examined the works of these unfortunates. For this one, it is allowed, but for that one is not. A spoiled, capricious girl. The muses retired to create with the chosen ones, and I, enveloped in sweet languor, in anticipation of pleasure, waited for the appearance, no, not of my gloomy husband, who was in the next war, but yours, yours and Dionysus. Now I understand what a fool I was. So many absurdities and so many mistakes.

HERMES: What mistakes? Enjoy Dionysus and me?

APHRODITE: No, that's all (*grins contemptuously*) are trifles.

HERMES: Gardens of pleasure that all mortals dream of are trifles? Dionysus and I are trifles? Then tell me what's not a trifle.

APHRODITE: Once Cefisso asked for one sculptor, almost a boy. I asked, what did he manage to do? She showed me the head of Faun, this freak, conceived

by my warlike husband in the grove of his Eternal City. The blood rushed to my head, and I tossed the face of this vile satyr. Then Cefisso told me that the sculptor's reaction was no less violent. Upon learning of my refusal, he rushed furiously with a chisel to the stone. Cefisso sat silently beside him and saw the centaurs emerged from the marble with each blow, smashing each other. As real ones. I was upset - that one also chose a war - and canceled my ban. But Cefisso, bashfully lowering her eyes, told me that the young man had lost interest in me. A few years later, that sculptor, as if in revenge, decorated with me, in a completely indecent pose, in the company with our son, the wall of a palace ... And, you say, the power over people. I did not sleep all night, and in the morning, tormented with shame, I went to him myself. I told everything - both about that past morning languor and about this sleepless night. The sculptor listened to me in silence and showed me the door.

HERMES: Aphrodite, stop torturing yourself. Your images decorate the best museums in the world; you are admired by millions of people. And you're worried about some bricklayer.

APHRODITE: You probably won't understand this, Hermes. What is the admiration of millions if your only one ignores you. And if an innocent bystander, a mere mortal, turns out to be more generous than you, the goddess of Olympus.

HERMES: What are you talking about?

APHRODITE: It's all about the same. Several hundred more years passed. I already forgot about that sculptor. But somehow, at the beginning of the First-Ares-Free War, Cefisso invited me for a walk. I was not myself then. After all, Ares had a terrible bender.

HERMES: That was when he realized that people didn't need his skills?

APHRODITE: Yes. Cefisso invited me to just take a walk. To Italy, to the old city of Flowers, to see the works of one artist for whom I once posed. At that time he literally captivated me with a wonderful portrait of a young woman, and ... And I went. Disguised as an ordinary city woman and went. Faithful Cefisso accompanied me. We walked around the city. She took me to a house. Cefisso

wanted to please me. On the wall, in one of the rooms, I saw my portrait. How I was in my youth. Coming out from under the roof of Poseidon. An immaculate pure virgin. I was so moved that I even bought a postcard with my picture. As a souvenir. Then - one more ... (*Pause.*) And suddenly I remembered about that sculptor. I asked Cefisso, are there any works of that young man who carved the centaurs? She asked in turn: "Are you angry with him anymore?" Of course not, my dear. "Then I'll show you one place where he worked, and I sat quietly because he worked as if he was remembering something very painful. His face was like that ... " And she took me to the temple. This is how I visited the temple of the human god for the first time. I just didn't understand what I was doing there. Some singing, some candles. In the depths of the altar, on the cross - a pitiful likeness of a chained Prometheus ... Out of boredom, I began to look around. And then I was hit, yes so ... It was not a lightning strike of Zeus, but something else ... At the opposite wall, I saw myself.

HERMES: Oh, that was a mirror. The good old Zeus joke is to remind us of himself and to strike with lightning in a copper mirror.

APHRODITE: No, Hermes, it was a mirror - of time. I lay in full view of everyone, in that very morning languor, a depraved, spoiled nymph. In a whisper, I asked Cefisso - what is it? "This is the work of that very sculptor, and it is called "Dawn." I stood like a stone pillar, and Cefisso continued to pull at my sleeve. "Goddess, there is another of his work here." Sweet girl, she really didn't understand-any-thing. She was just happy for that sculptor. Cefisso turned my head with a glance, and there, in the depths, I was again. In that sleepless night, tormented by shame. "And this sculpture, Cefisso said, is called "Night."

HERMES: You said - for the first time. You and then went to the temple of the human god?

APHRODITE: That same evening. I asked Cefisso - where else did you create with this sculptor. And she took me to the Eternal City. You know, although the locals consider me their patroness, I had never been there until that evening. I hated this city from the moment it was born, and no force could make me to enter

it first. But then I, as if bewitched, obediently followed Cefisso. And there, at the walls of the Colosseum, the fall started. The falling into depths that were inaccessible even for Hades. I saw my husband's arena, his Colosseum, and immediately remembered one night. Ares spoke with enthusiasm about the battle of the gladiators, where he had covered the back of one Thracian, and together they had defeated a dozen Samnites. But I was napping. I just asked lazily, how did it end? And having heard about the love of a rich patrician woman for that gladiator, I fell asleep with the triumph of the victor. Through my sleep, I continued to hear the even voice of my husband, talking about the victories of that Thracian and about his death. I even felt a kind of sorrow in Ares' voice, but I didn't want to wake up. So that evening, although Cefisso held my hand, the destroyed walls of the Colosseum carried me deeper and deeper. To Tartarus. But that was not all. The Colosseum was not the end of our trip. Cefisso tugged on my sleeve again. We went to the main temple of the Eternal City. There I saw another work of that sculptor. Pietà. And I realized what a disadvantaged woman I was. Hermes, do you hear? Dis-ad-van-taged. Because I did not grieve about any of my own son, born from Hephaestus, you, Dionysus, even from Adonis, like that mortal. And just then I reached the very heart of Tartarus.

Ares enters.

ARES: Hello my dear. Ah, you're already here.

APHRODITE: You look so pleased. I haven't seen you like this for a long time.

ARES: Of course. I met Hermes' request, talked to someone there, and ran away to football. So, Hermes, be calm. Your boy will live, invent his magic box, and the world trade will go up again.

HERMES: Are you sure?

ARES: Hermes, I saw the threads in Clotho's hands. I even kept them. Yesterday evening, when I made my decision, they became definitely stronger.

APHRODITE: You are trying not to say something. And football is usually played during the day. Wow, he blushed!

ARES: Aphrodite, stop it. It was a student league; they play in the evening when it's not so hot. But anyway, I just sniffed in this idiotic uniform. And, of course, I blushed. How good it was in our days in tunics.

APHRODITE: Didn't you happen to be in the make-up room with that girl in the bloated skirt? You had been a master for such tricks.

ARES: I confess I was. Once upon a time. We were all - not gifts. Isn't it Hermes?

HERMES: Times are changing.

ARES: Oh, you become a philosopher. Indeed, a lot is changing in the world. Maybe your friend Dionysus has stopped drinking?

HERMES: Imagine, yes.

APHRODITE: Ares, tell me where have you been?

ARES: Aphrodite, you hear - Dionysus stopped drinking. Let's listen to Hermes. Well, go on.

HERMES: A hundred years ago, I got him carried away with one idea, and now he is reaping the fruits of our common success.

ARES: Did he become a businessman too?

HERMES: Not really. He helped Gallic winemakers grow a new vine, and now, on both sides of the Ocean, this vine is producing a rich monetary harvest.

Aphrodite (*looks not at Hermes, but at Ares and changes in her face. Metal appears in her voice and hatred in her eyes*): Are you talking about Bordeaux? Amazing taste. And what aromas! All are so similar and yet so different (*turns to Hermes.*) How many times have I asked Ares to make us a small supply of this wine! And he doesn't want to hear. Give him only beer.

Ares (*doesn't notice Aphrodite's change of mood*): Yes, there is nothing better than beer. In general, I think that in the art of Dionysus, if it can be called an art, the best time was his youth, when he invented Egyptian beer. The pyramids are still standing because their builders drank his beer. I somehow drifted north, to the local gods ...

HERMES: You, to the northern gods?

Ares (*looking at the astonished faces of Aphrodite and Hermes*): Nothing special, a friendly meeting. The exchange of experience. It was a long time ago. The northern gods also asked me at first about the recipes for Greek wines. But I advised against it. Wine is not a warrior's drink. But I told them about beer. And they tried it. Hermes, a beer, it still does not get tired of making yours, how it's called, eh, turnovers?

HERMES: I accept. But not all people are warriors and some people like wine. Aphrodite, I'll ask Dionysus to send you some bottles.

ARES: Oh, good old company. You also offer him to deliver them here personally.

Aphrodite (*continues to look at Ares with hatred*): Well, that's a great idea. Hermes, come together.

HERMES: If only Ares promises not to kick Dionysus down the stairs.

ARES: I can.

HERMES: Ares, stop it. So many years have passed. You yourself just said that times had changed.

ARES: There are things that are not forgotten.

HERMES: You still can't forgive Dionysus for Lycurgus' madness?

ARES: Lycurgus was a wonderful boy; he punched Dionysus right and the three of you, powdered the brains of Zeus. It was him who made my boy mad (*Finally, he looks up at Aphrodite and feels the change in her mood.*) Then I felt very sorry for him, but now I sometimes envy him. Maybe it's easier in this world to be insane. To remember nothing, not to understand what is happening around you ...

HERMES: Yes, times are changing. To hear that from Ares about ten thousand years ago...

ARES: You shouldn't have started talking about this wine. (*He continues to stare at Aphrodite, and she - at him.*) Hermes, I will kick Dionysus down the stairs not because of Lycurgus, but because you are the only one to whom I have forgiven tricks with Aphrodite. Only because you told me everything honestly

yourself (*turns to Hermes*). How you needed then that war! Ruin of pastures, soaring prices, and drachmas (*depicts*), drachmas were spinning in your eyes. Your greed was so strong that it even awakened a conscience in my dear little wife. How cute you were, such kids who accidentally spilled milk. Sorry, dad. Even a tear was knocked out, what was there to start a war.

APHRODITE (*her face suddenly changes as if cringed.*): Ares, I was really ashamed. I could have sunk through the ground, into the kingdom of Hades.

ARES: You should try. You would have become a concubine of Hades and would have retained your immortality.

Aphrodite (*hysterically*): How dare you tell me that?

ARES: Me? I dare. From whom did your son spy on your joys-for-three and taught Alexander to share a bed not only with women?

APHRODITE: Yes, we loved each other! But it was much better than hanging around the Vestals, who then gave birth to freaks.

ARES: Well, not really such freaks.

APHRODITE: Freaks. To the point that even their mothers were ashamed of the newborns and threw them to the she-wolves.

ARES: Yes, but these, as you call them, freaks founded the Eternal City.

APHRODITE: And what did your Eternal City give? The murder for the amusement of the public? The debauchery?

ARES: Ha ha. Again, that's not to me. That was done by your son too, yours, and this bounder. I raised emperors, warriors, and rulers of the world. And it was your bastard Eros who dragged boyfriends, sisters, and mothers in their beds.

APHRODITE: Yes, I gave birth to Eros from Hermes. But now I'm going to tell you more.

HERMES: Aphrodite, stop.

APHRODITE: Do you think Phobos and Deimos are your sons? Now, they are not your sons.

ARES: I know that.

Pause.

APHRODITE (*shocked*): So Clotho did fall.

ARES: That wasn't Clotho. She didn't say anything to me. I have known that since their birth. I saw the fear in your eyes when I took them in my arms for the first time. You were afraid that I would find out the truth and kill them. It was your fear that entered their bloodstream and became the reason for their existence. And me - what? I tried to educate them as warriors but to no avail. All my skill only increased that fear and, in the end, turned it into the horror.

APHRODITE (*depressed*): You knew it all the time and kept silent?

HERMES: I think I'll go.

ARES: Sit down. What are you afraid of? I have not killed you in these ten thousand years, why should I do it today.

HERMES: Ares, they are not my children. This is ysisus.

ARES: What's the difference? While I fought, you all circled around my wife. And when I returned, I felt like a stranger, as a redundant. The cheerful, relaxed company (*begins to take off his uniform*). What could I do among you, lovers of wine, flowers, and music? Me, smelling of horse sweat and human blood? To talk about my victories? (*Buttons fly off from the uniform.*) About the deserts, which we crossed with Alexander, leaving everywhere men and horses, dried up by thirst? About the fighting Indian elephants, that caused fear even to me? Aphrodite, do you remember that evening? (*Mimics Aphrodite.*) "Ah, elephants. Dionysus, Hermes, remember what amazing wine the Queen of Saba served us when we traveled with her on elephants? " And so I was in a hurry to return to the place where a word does not hurt as painful as a sword, and the treason is just a blow to the back, not to the heart. Where a woman is not an object of pleasure, but a reward for valor. And where it is possible to conceive a child in gratitude for listening to you. So that later, gritting your teeth, return to where no one is waiting for you.

APHRODITE: Not true, I was waiting for you.

ARES: You did. In the company of these bastards with a well-hung tongues. How could I play the harp for you with my hands, these hands, hardened by the hilt

of the sword? And what did I understand about this? I just saw how the cloud of your lechery covers my Eternal City. And when the lesson of Hephaestus was not enough for them, I went, but not to Zeus. It was then that I went north to the local gods. And they gave birth to countless waves of warriors. The waves that had swallowed up my Eternal City depraved by you.

APHRODITE: Ares, I have to tell you something. But just let him go.

ARES: Why? During these ten thousand years, he has become a member of our family. It's kind of like a family council here. Let him sit and listen.

APHRODITE: Ares ...

ARES: What can you tell me? That you loved me?

APHRODITE: Yes, I loved you, from the very minute I saw you at my wedding with Hephaestus, where the will of Zeus brought me. Ares, I'm a woman, I couldn't be alone. If you stayed even for a day, these (*points to Hermes*), these ... they would never be around. I loved you, and you loved the war. I was in despair; I was waiting for your words, your tenderness. But you haven't seen anything. And then, to get you back, I came up with a war.

ARES: You?

HERMES: You?

APHRODITE (*with metal in her voice*): Do you think that I am a weak spoiled girl? You are the sons of Zeus, and I am the daughter of Uranus himself. Don't forget this. It was you, Hermes, who gave me the idea. Have you forgotten how you told me that the Greeks were raving about the treasures of Troy, that your grandson Odysseus was dreaming and seeing himself at the head of the army of all Greeks? I had only to make the young wife of the aged Menelaus, married to him by your Odysseus, fall in love with the younger son of Priam. I went to Troy and promised Paris great love and my protection. And then it was not me, but you, Hermes, who equipped the Trojan merchant fleet, put Paris on the ship and sent him to the shores of Sparta. The rest you all know.

ARES: And then you persuaded me to come to you at the Trojan camp?

Aphrodite (*with a pause, softening almost to a whisper*): It was our honeymoon. Do you remember how in the evenings, after the battle, I washed your abrasions and wounds? How did you fall asleep on my lap? How did we make love to the sound of the waves?

HERMES: Ares, that's all ...

APHRODITE (*again with metal in her voice*): Are you going to accuse me of lying?

HERMES: No, but it really wasn't so. Ares, she called you to Troy to humiliate, maybe even to kill. She knew that my grandson was the favorite of Athena. She knew that Odysseus would summon Heracles. She wanted to cover you with eternal shame in order to get away from you. To me.

APHRODITE: How dare you?

HERMES (*in very raised tones*): I dare. After all, I am a member of the family. You also knew that Heracles would never forgive him Pirone. He almost succeeded to beat you once, Ares. Therefore, under the walls of Troy, you ran from him like the last coward. But Athena overtook you. And plunged to the ground. And you, Aphrodite, stayed with him only because I gave up on you. At the request of your teacher. Poseidon said that he was worried about your honor, but I immediately guessed that he himself was hungry for you. And he took me by the throat. Poseidon threatened me that if I did not give up on you, my grandson would wander the seas forever. And I gave up. So there, under the walls of Troy, you were both bargaining chips.

APHRODITE: Ares, do you believe that?

Ares (*quietly and bitterly*): Heracles ... When Kyknos, my son, from me and Pirone, challenged him to a fight, I knew he had no chance. And I - came to help him. I thought that by allowing myself to be wounded, I would satisfy the immeasurable ambition of Heracles, and he would spare Kyknos. But he did not spare him. I raised my dead boy in my arms and launched a swan on the water... I could not kill Heracles, neither then nor later, under the walls of Troy. And not because I was afraid to kill the favorite of Zeus. His death, Clotho had told me so,

cut off the thread leading to Leonidas ... Hermes, I don't believe you. I don't believe you because for all these years I haven't found the answer to the question - who punished Hercules with the death of Pirene so that his sobs made the sea shudder and erected mountains. We, the all-powerful gods of Olympus? I did not ask Zeus about this. And Athena ... You are a fool, Hermes, and you will stay a fool forever. Do you know why? Your destiny, your fate is to seek benefits in everything. I gave in to Athena because she is a woman. It would be little glory to defeat her. And why did you drag my wife in and insult Poseidon? (*Ares begins to raise his voice.*) Do you think the lord of the seas came to bargain for her? Praise to Zeus that not all educators are still groping their students. Yes, he was simply sick of you, you and your rogue Odysseus, polluting the sea and the air. That was so absurd of you to come up with this! (*Parodies Hermes*) "My grandson told me that the daughters of Ares and Aphrodite live on the coast of the Inhospitable Sea, and cut off their breasts to make it easier to lower the bowstring." (*Already in a rage*) When did you see me with the bow, the secondhand dirty story dealer? And before you go away, as a family member, you should know that Aphrodite and I have no children yet.

Hermes leaves. Aphrodite sits down on a chair.

Scene 2.

Ares walks around the room for a long time and finally sits on the floor at Aphrodite's feet. She puts her hand on his head.

APHRODITE: Did you really love Kyknos?

ARES: I've always dreamed of a son who, when I would become anemic, could stand up for you, Afro.

APHRODITE: And I - about a girl who will bring Harmony to the world. Then, under the walls of Troy, did you know that you would be defeated by Athena?

ARES: Clotho told me this the same day you asked me to come to you in Troy.

APHRODITE: And you came.

Pause.

APHRODITE: Wait, I'll show you something. (*She gets up, goes into another room and returns, holding in one hand, a framed postcard, in the other, an unframed one.*) I once bought this from people. This one, you know it very well. It stays on my bedside table. When you're out of sorts, you even snort at her. And this one, you've never seen.

ARES: What's this?

APHRODITE: This is my gift. For you. This is another picture of that Italian master (*hands the card to Ares*). Do you recognize us, under the walls of Troy?

ARES: Did you tell this artist everything?

APHRODITE: There are things that masters do not need to tell about.

Ares (*examines the card*): I'm here - sleeping. And you, you look so at me.

APHRODITE: Then I was very afraid of your inevitable meeting with Athena.

ARES: A honeymoon is a festivity for two persons. I did not come under the walls of Troy. I came to you. After all, even Clotho doesn't know all the predestinations.

APHRODITE: She thinks more and more that this is the lot of a human god.

ARES: Maybe. Otherwise, who would have made Heracles sob over Pirene's body?

APHRODITE: And you - to wake up.

ARES: And you – to wait for my awakening. I understood - this was what Clotho wanted. But Clotho's wish was still not enough. Now I know - this is what you wanted. I'm sorry I was late. I have not been to football. My dear, my one and only Afro, football will start in a month. And of course, I wasn't in the make-up room.

APHRODITE: But where?

ARES: In the morning I was in a hurry. I even forgot about the coffee. I hurried to Atropos.

APHRODITE: To Atropos?

ARES: I wanted to ask her not to cut the thread of that girl. (*Aphrodite tenses.*) For you. Her love could still take place. But I came too late. Atropos said that at night the thread had been torn itself.

APHRODITE (*sighs in relief*): Don't forget, they're mortals.

ARES: Yes, mortals.

Pause.

ARES: I was already running late for my meeting with Hermes when I had a great idea. But then I would have to stay after this party.

APHRODITE: And where did you stay?

ARES: Don't laugh. I was in the library.

APHRODITE: In the library? You?

ARES: You are laughing, after all, my dear Afro. I have a gift for you too. I have still managed to do it. Do you remember the thread from which Clotho spun the life of a professor of ancient Greek literature?

APHRODITE: Yes, of course, I remember. Have you really met him? And told the truth about us?

ARES: I haven't even changed. As I was, in this stupid military uniform. I sat down with him in the library, asking for help. I said I am writing a book about great battles, do you tell me something about three hundred Spartans. We talked. You know, he told me so vividly about Leonidas, as if he himself was there, in Thermopylae.

APHRODITE: And you?

Ares (*puts his head on Aphrodite's lap*): The library was closing, and we went to a cafe nearby. I sat and listened to him, and then I said - young man, drop it all. There are fairy tales, and if anything really happened; he immediately boiled over with anger; you want to say that the story of the three hundred Spartans is a fiction; no, no, I tell him, but when I draw up a master plan for the siege of Troy, it is very difficult to determine to what type of weapons all these Greek gods of yours are attributed - Athena, Ares. I was recently with my wife at the opera;

wonderful music, a magic flute, but the same mystery. Some kind of the queen of the night ... A fairy tale. Why would you tell other people's tales? Even the tales of the great Homer? Write music to them. Or even better. Write your own tale. A love story, for example.

APHRODITE: A love story?

ARES: Yes. He suddenly paused...

APHRODITE: Then, with Clotho, did you see something else in his thread?

ARES: And then he talks: "You write about other people's battles, although you have behind you, here he points to my stupid badges, there were a lot (*laughs*) - this is he's saying to me - of your own battles. So, you're able to understand that by telling these ancient tales, I myself am experiencing, each time anew, both the battle at Thermopylae and the siege of Troy. But what about the love story - why did you say that? A figure of speech?" And such a sparkle burns in his eyes. You are right, there are things that masters do not need to tell about. A figure of speech, I say.

APHRODITE: Will he write a love story?

ARES: Yes.

APHRODITE: Will be there a happy end?

ARES: Unfortunately not. People have not yet learned to write about love with a happy end.

APHRODITE: That's a pity. But someday they will learn.

ARES: Someday they will.

APHRODITE: And they will stop fighting.

ARES: And they'll stop fighting.

APHRODITE: And then I will believe in their god.

ARES: And then I'll believe in their god.

APHRODITE: And we can finally give birth to a child (*tilts her head and kisses Ares*).

The light turns off.

The curtain.