

Finding Zeus

By

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Charles and Michael are in their living room: there are two chairs. Michael sits in one, reading the newspaper. He wears Charles's reading glasses. The second chair is empty except for Michael's reading glasses which rest on the seat-cushion. Charles enters and notices that things are not as they should be.

C: What are you doing?

Michael ignores him.

C: You're in my chair.

Michael rattles the newspaper.

C: Yours is here....next to mine.

M: Not today.

C: I'm not kidding around, Michael. Get up.

M: Yours is mine and mine is yours.

C: And you're wearing my reading glasses...

M: They're stronger. My eyes are getting worse.

C: So....I'm to sit in your chair and use your weak reading glasses and generally be displaced.

M: No big deal.

As Charles sits on the edge of Michael's chair, he takes off his shoes and socks.

C: There....barefootedness is atypical just like this chair scenario.

M: You have ugly feet.

C: Now that's not what you said when we married. You said I had the nicest feet you'd ever seen. And we both know that you had seen your fair share of feet in order to make such an astute comparison.

M: They're fat and hairy and I detect fungus on your big toe.

C: Which big toe?

M: Your left big-toe! (Beat) Please put your socks back on.

C: Once you've vacated my chair.

M: Charles?

C: (Looking at his toe) Yes, Michael-dear.

M: Nothing....forget it.

C: Go ahead.

M: Your chair sags.

C: I'm sure it does. I have gained some weight which depresses the cushion. I have fungus on my left big toe. You haven't gained weight, but you have sagged. We both have. We're older now.

M: I have not sagged.

C: It's normal to sag. Everything sags given enough time. Our skin has lost its tightness...its texture...our muscles have weakened and our sinew is no longer....sinewy.

M: I'm leaving you.

C: Is that why you are sitting in my chair?

M: I'm leaving you....today.

C: That's too bad. I don't see any bags.

M: I've sent them ahead.

C: To where....a hotel?

M: To my lover's house. He's young and has the most amazing sinew. He cares about me...makes me laugh....tries to please me...does everything in his power to please me. (Beat) That pleases me.

C: I'm glad you're pleased. That's just fine. Good luck with everything.

Charles puts on Michael's reading glasses. He blinks a few times.

C: I think my eyes are getting stronger.

M: He's tall....with fair hair and blue eyes. He has excellent posture. His manners are excellent...and witty? Oh, he's so witty...and when he smiles his eyes twinkle.

C: A veritable God.

M: I call him Zeus. He calls me Athena.

C: The Goddess of Love.

M: That's Aphrodite. Athena is the goddess of wisdom and courage...companion to heroes.

C: There's a diner called Athena.

M: He's part Greek and likes to do what Greeks do.

C: And that is?

M: Do I really have to say?

C: Why are you being lewd? You never were. You were shy when we met...shy and demure....almost submissive. And I was your man...strong and powerful....your hero, your superman....that's what you would call me....your superman. Remember?

M: Time is kryptonite.

C: And now we have this Zeus-business. It's very obvious that I am not who I was once. Neither are you. We sag. I'm wiser though...more thoughtful....far more sensitive. I'm attuned to your whims...used to your fancies. I even enjoy your company....when you're not sitting in my chair, that is. I'm honor-bound to care for you as you age...that's a promise I intend to keep.

M: I'm sorry.

Beat.

C: When are you leaving?

M: I already have.

C: When? God damn it!

M: (Getting up) Your chair is free now.

C: I don't want it.

M: Have your stupid chair back! Sag-away!

C: (Taking his chair) Thank you.

M: Zeus and I are leaving for Athens. We'll visit the Acropolis and then we'll go to Piraeus and take the hydrofoil to the island of Hydra. On top of a hill there is a stone home...it's his family's....there's a sweeping view of the village, the unpaved streets, red-tiled roofs...and in the near distance is the

M: (Cont.) Myrtoan Sea and spread beyond that...all of Peloponnesia. (Beat) The water sparkles in the sun like his eyes twinkle when he smiles and Zeus and I will live in harmony under a deep blue Grecian sky. It's deep blue...azure....the ocean is a lighter blue, but not by much....and because Zeus is a creator he's created the sky and the ocean and he's created me. He's recreated me.

C: It's a beautiful dream.

M: Truth, no dream!

C: I had a dream...last night in fact. I dreamt that we had rented a cottage...a white clapboard cottage with green wooden shutters...we had rented it for a week, for our anniversary. And we were going to live in this cottage completely cut-off from the rest of the world. And we were going to look into each other's eyes and rediscover all the flecks and colors and all the flaws and look into the mystery that lies behind our flawed eyes and then we'd find that nothing can be shrouded, nothing hidden, and that all our truths are shared and all our perception joined and that where you end is where I begin. Do you know where this cottage is?

M: No.

C: It's near an ocean. It has a wide view of a deep bay. Boats rock back and forth and their halyards sing at night.

M: Where is it, Charles?

C: Sag Harbor.

Beat.

M: Sag Harbor? Oh, shut up.

C: Yes. Sag Harbor...our new home! You can be on your Mt. Olympus with the young and virile Zeus, but I'm going to me in my cottage on Sag Harborwith you! (Beat) Do you want to be there with me?

M: I always have but I'm not sure now.

C: Don't lose faith.

M: It's getting harder.

C: We'll make some changes...have faith. I'll get my toe looked at and I'll lose some weight and I'll try to please you more often. (Beat) Will you do that for me?

M: Put your socks back on please.

C: And we'll trade reading glasses, or even get new ones, how's that? Even the real Zeus had to wear reading glasses occasionally, looking at all those maps, plotting wars, and trying to keep all those Gods and Goddesses straight.

M: Did he?

C: A little known fact is that Zeus actually invented reading glasses because he knew that eventually all Gods got old and that there would be new Gods to take their place....Athena and her heroes....man and Superman....Michael and his Charles. Don't lose faith!

M: Okay, okay.

C: (Using the glasses) My eyes are getting stronger...stronger by the minute. It's a sign! What did he have again?

M: Who?

C: Superman.

M: X-Ray vision?

C: Now that would be something, wouldn't it?

M: Come here, Superman.

C: (Using the glasses) Wait! I see you.

M: I see you too, Charles.

C: I really see you. I see inside you.

M: Just come here.

End.

