

God-Given Talent

By Alysia Kozbial

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DEDICATION

To my family and friends for their love and support, and Mr. Klever for being an awesome teacher!

STORY OF THE PLAY

Marcus lives in an exciting time for theatre: the very beginning in Ancient Greece. He wants to become a great actor and impress everyone at the Festival of Dionysus, especially the lovely maiden, Chara. Unfortunately, he can't act, and the gods Dionysus and Apollo see this and decide to help him out. With his new, god-given talent of acting, Marcus is able to win the tragedy competition and the heart of Chara, but not without upsetting two goddesses on Mt. Olympus. Hera and Aphrodite are outraged and have plans to stir up the situation even more. This magical little story wraps romance, humor, and the message of liking people for who they are around a piece of ancient history for all to enjoy.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 3 w, extras.)

MARCUS: Young aspiring actor.

THESPIAS: Famous actor, middle-aged.

DIONYSUS: God of wine, patron god of the Greek stage.

APOLLO: God of music.

CHARA: Princess, daughter of the King of Athens.

HERA: Goddess of marriage and birth.

APHRODITE: Goddess of love and beauty.

KING OF ATHENS: Chara's father.

REVELERS

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene 1: Festival of Dionysus.
Scene 2: Drama competition.
Scene 3: Mt. Olympus.
Scene 4: Morning after the competition.
Scene 5: King's party to honor the winner.
Scene 6: Drama competition.
Scene 7: Morning after the competition.

PROPS

Lyre
Mug
Golden mask

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Thunder
Smoke
Birds singing

Scene 1

(AT RISE: The stage is dark. The SPOTLIGHT comes up on MARCUS, a young man and a poor actor, in his 20s, draped in white sheets, or a toga, wearing a mask.)

MARCUS: I am the great and powerful Zeus! Grandson of Mother Earth, and ruler of all Mount Olympus! *(Pauses, HE has forgotten the rest of his lines.)* I had given life to a son... with the lovely mortal maiden, Selma ... or Semele ... or was it Hera? Um ... we named the child Dionysus. He's the god of wine ...

THESPIS: Stop! *(ENTERS, goes to Marcus's spotlight.)* Please, stop. *(Faces toward the audience.)* Welcome to the festival of Dionysus! Everyone, please! Eat, drink lots of wine, and be merry! *(The LIGHTS come up, and around MARCUS and THESPIS are crowds of people, dressed in clothes and togas, drinking, laughing, and having a good time. The stage seems to come to life with jugglers, entertainers, and musicians. THESPIS leads MARCUS downstage through the crowd.)* Tell me, son, what is your name?

MARCUS: *(Staring at THESPIS, starstruck.)* Um, oh, Thespis...

THESPIS: No, no, I'm Thespis. Who are you?

MARCUS: My ... my name is Marcus, and I am a huge fan of yours. When you first started this whole "portraying a different person" thing, I knew I wanted to be an actor just like you.

THESPIS: I'm touched, really, but you're the worst actor I've ever seen. I mean, you can't even memorize a few lines about one of your own gods!

MARCUS: I was just nervous. I swear I can do better. Oh, I can even prove it to you at the tragedy competition!

THESPIS: *(Spotting someone in the crowd and waves to him, distracted.)* Why don't you save us all the pain and just go and celebrate ...

MARCUS: But really, I can ...

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(Suddenly a few GREEK MAIDENS dance around MARCUS and he gets pulled into the crowd. Out of the crowd walks DIONYSUS, wearing a tallish hat that covers his goat-like horns, and APOLLO carrying a lyre.)

DIONYSUS: Ah! My favorite time of the year! The festival of ... me!

APOLLO: *(Smiling.)* Ah, I love it, too! So much music in the air, thanks to me.

DIONYSUS: Oh, Apollo, don't be too full of yourself. By the end of the night, everyone will be too inebriated to be playing any music.

(HE laughs and a REVELER passes him a mug.)

APOLLO: Thanks to you. *(HE accepts the mug.)* Hopefully, it won't affect the tragedies too much.

DIONYSUS: Oh, yes, the tragedies. Well, I'm sure anyone could act better than that young man did earlier.

(THEY laugh and watch the MORTALS party and dance, spinning around. DOWNSTAGE, CHARA and MARCUS appear out of the crowd, bumping into each other. They stare at each other, instantly attracted to one another.)

CHARA: Oh, I'm sorry ...

MARCUS: No, I'm sorry. I wasn't paying attention ...

CHARA: Oh, neither was I. *(SHE pauses and smiles.)* Are you, do you happen to be an actor?

MARCUS: *(Hesitantly.)* Yes ... yes! I am!

CHARA: Oh, I love actors! I love the theatre! Girls aren't allowed to participate, but it still amazes me. Have you met Thespis yet?

MARCUS: Uh, yeah. *(HE points toward the crowd, gesturing to the direction where THESPIS was last.)* He was very ...

CHARA: Oh, my gods! I should go talk to him! *(SHE smiles at HIM.)* I'll see you at the Tragedy Competition!

End of Freeview

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