

A TOUR THROUGH TIME

By Megan Orr

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A TOUR THROUGH TIME

A One Act Comedy

By Megan Orr

SYNOPSIS: Museums. Monuments of ancient artifacts, dead men's bones, and long-forgotten dreams. Not this museum. A group of mostly reluctant learners from Mr. Matthews's history class has been sent on a field trip to the Living History Museum. In addition to meeting their quirky tour guide, these students come face-to-face with history in the flesh, interactive exhibits that bring the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman Empires to life in a way that a history textbook never could. What will these students learn and will it change the way they view the past and the present? Join us on a tour through time with a history quiz at the end for the audience to see what they have learned!

DURATION: 50 minutes.

TIME: Modern-day.

SETTING: Living History Museum, USA.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 females, 2 males, 10 either)

WORKER (m/f)..... Front desk worker... a bored employee *(14 lines)*

MILO/MILA (m/f)..... Student; a history buff; the only student actually excited about a trip to the museum; constantly educating others *(90 lines)*

LINK (m/f)..... Student; the video game addict; if it didn't happen on a screen, it didn't happen *(67 lines)*

NATALIE (f)..... Student; a pacifist vegan activist; a flighty, romantic lover, not a fighter *(66 lines)*

RACQUEL (f)..... Student; athletic but academically challenged; LINK calls her Rocky *(83 lines)*

ANDY (m/f).....	Student; the rebel; unafraid to break some rules to have fun or to get what he/she wants (<i>73 lines</i>)
MR./MRS. SILVESTER/SYLVA	
PHILLIPS (m/f)	The exuberant tour guide at the Living History Museum; speaks in a dramatic, affected manner (<i>63 lines</i>)
HATSHEPSUT (f)	Ancient Egypt display; one of the few female pharaohs; strong and blunt (<i>9 lines</i>)
CLEOPATRA VII (f).....	Ancient Egypt display; presided over the dying days of the Egyptian empire; flirtatious and confident (<i>18 lines</i>)
SOCRATES (m/f).....	Ancient Greece display; the Greek philosopher; calm, reasonable, logical (<i>17 lines</i>)
LEONIDAS (m/f)	Ancient Greece display; the legendary King of Sparta, a hot-headed warrior (<i>21 lines</i>)
HOMER (m/f)	Ancient Greece display; the morose blind poet (<i>8 lines</i>)
ALEXANDER THE GREAT (m)	Ancient Greece display; the young Greek Macedonian conqueror; overly dramatic; a game show host (<i>21 lines</i>)
AUGUSTUS (m/f).....	The Roman Empire display; the valiant founder of the Roman Empire who is constantly looking to expand his empire (<i>30 lines</i>)
SPARTACUS (m).....	The Roman Empire display; the famous gladiator who revolted against the Romans (<i>13 lines</i>)
NERO (m/f)	The Roman Empire display; the smooth-talking, dramatic, occasionally murderous, bipolar fifth emperor of Rome (<i>21 lines</i>)

COSTUMES

FRONT DESK WORKER – black or navy polo and khaki pants; lanyard with name tag; sneakers

MILO / MILA – button-down shirt or polo with khaki pants and loafers; Harry-Potter-style scarf (narrow, striped)

LINK – video game themed T-shirt, jeans, and tennis shoes

NATALIE – environmentally friendly T-shirt; jeans or denim shorts or skirt; flip flops or Birkenstocks

RACQUEL – sports jersey and track pants or jeans

ANDY – black T-shirt, dark wash or black jeans, black tennis shoes

MR./MRS. SILVESTER/SYLVIA PHILLIPS – a suit and tie, or a skirt and shirt set; lanyard with name tag

HATSHEPSUT – Egyptian pharaoh costume

CLEOPATRA VII – Egyptian pharaoh costume; rubber or toy snake

ALEXANDER THE GREAT – Grecian warrior costume; sandals

SOCRATES – white Grecian tunic; sandals

LEONIDAS – Grecian warrior costume; sandals

HOMER – white Grecian tunic; sandals

AUGUSTUS – white Roman robe, purple sash, gold metal wrist bands, gold leaf crown; sandals

SPARTACUS – gladiator costume; sandals; helmet optional

NERO – white Roman robe, blue sash; sandals

SET

All scenes can occur with or without a backdrop. Instead, a few key props are used to suggest the set. Suggestions for each have been included below:

SCENE 1: Living History Museum Lobby, Large Roman columns stand at downstage left and downstage right, optional. A half-circle admissions counter is set at center stage. Stage left of the counter is a display of colorful brochures. A red velvet roped queue line stretches from the counter to stage right.

SCENES 2-4: Antiquity Display at Living History Museum, Large Roman columns stand at downstage left and downstage right, optional.

SCENE 5: Living History Museum Lobby, Large Roman columns stand at downstage left and downstage right, optional. A half-circle admissions counter is set at center stage. Stage left of the counter is a display of colorful brochures. A red velvet roped queue line stretches from the counter to stage right.

LIGHTS

Standard indoor lighting can be used throughout. Lights fade and rise between scenes. Spotlight optional.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

MILO's description of "Harrison Middle School" may be adjusted to "Harrison Junior High" or "Harrison High School" to fit the age of your cast. Additionally, feel free to adjust pronouns as needed to match the actors or actresses playing each role.

Halloween is a great time to pick up costumes and props online and in stores for the Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians. YouTube also provides how-to videos to create costumes for each of these groups.

I suggest contacting your local movie theater to see if they might be willing to lend the stanchions and velvet queue ropes needed for the Living History Museum lobby scenes in exchange for advertising in the play program. If necessary, stanchions and velvet queue ropes may also be purchased online.

PROPS

SCENE 1:

- half-circle admissions counter
- display of colorful brochures
- red velvet queue line
- museum map (MILO)
- handheld video game system (LINK)
- crossbody bag with 4 red pinnies and 2 blue pinnies (PHILLIPS)
- telephone

SCENE 2:

- handheld video game system (LINK)
- snake (CLEOPATRA)

SCENE 3:

- crossbody bag with 4 red pinnies and 2 blue pinnies (PHILLIPS)
- handheld video game system (LINK)
- floor placard about LEONIDAS
- Harry-Potter-style scarf (MILO)
- floor placard about ALEXANDER THE GREAT

SCENE 4:

- shackles (ANDY)
- plate of concession stand nacho (ANDY)
- handheld video game system (LINK)
- sword (LEONIDAS)
- snake (CLEOPATRA)
- gift shop bags containing hats, T-shirts, sandals, food, water bottle, and rubber ducky (AUGUSTUS)
- packet of matches (empty for safety)

SCENE 5:

- half-circle admissions counter
- display of colorful brochures
- red velvet queue line
- telephone

SCENE 1**LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM LOBBY**

AT START: *Lights rise. Large Roman columns stand at downstage left and downstage right, optional. A half-circle admissions counter is set at center stage. Stage left of the counter is a display of colorful brochures. A red velvet roped queue line stretches from the counter to stage right.*

When lights first rise, one bored FRONT DESK WORKER sits behind the counter. After a moment, MILO, RACQUEL, LINK, NATALIE, and ANDY enter from stage right. MILO is eagerly scanning a museum map in his hand. LINK is playing on a handheld video game system.

RACQUEL: Can I just say that whoever had the bright idea of dragging us downtown for a museum tour at this ungodly hour deserves a double serving of the school cafeteria's Salisbury steak.

MILO: Ungodly hour? Racquel, it's nine o'clock in the morning. We're normally in math class right now.

RACQUEL: Oh. *(A beat.)* Wait. We're getting out of math? On second thought—

MILO: Besides, this is the Living History Museum! Just think of all the amazing things we'll get to learn about here today! Heroes of ancient history, explorers, inventors—!

RACQUEL: Milo?

MILO: Yes?

RACQUEL: Has anyone ever told you what a nerd you are?

MILO: *(With a sigh.)* Yes.

RACQUEL: Okay, good. Just checking.

LINK: *(Without looking up from the handheld video game.)* Hey there, Rocky. You might want to ease up on Milo there. Odds are, you're going to pump his gas someday.

RACQUEL: I'm going to do WHAT?!?

MILO: Don't be ridiculous, Link. I plan on driving an electric car. Much more sustainable.

NATALIE: Excellent choice, Milo. Love our Earth. It's the only one we've got!

LINK: Fine. If she's not going to be pumping your gas, then she'll probably be flipping your burgers. (*A beat.*) Hmmm. Maybe you should be nicer to her.

RACQUEL: What makes you think I'm going to be flipping burgers someday?!

LINK: What's half of three fifty?

RACQUEL: Ummm...

LINK: See? Too slow to run register.

MILO: (*To RACQUEL.*) Maybe you shouldn't be missing math class.

MILO steps up to the admissions counter.

WORKER: (*Bored.*) Good morning, time travelers. And welcome to the Living History Museum, where history comes to life.

NATALIE: (*Skeptically.*) Are you sure?

ANDY: Judging by her/his enthusiasm, I don't think so.

MILO: Shhh. (*To WORKER, enthusiastically.*) Good morning, fellow history lover!

WORKER: (*Still bored.*) Yeah. We'll go with that.

MILO: We're one of the student groups here for the Harrison Middle School tour. I believe you're expecting us?

WORKER: (*Deadpan.*) Field trips. My favorite. Please kindly step to the right of the ticket window. Your tour guide will be with you shortly.

ANDY: (*Alarmed.*) Tour guide?!

MILO: Thank you! (*To the other students, MILO, LINK, NATALIE and RACQUEL.*) This way, guys.

ANDY: Wait a minute! Nobody said anything about having to listen to a tour guide!

MILO: How else do you expect to learn anything?

ANDY: Expect to learn anything? Are you kidding me? It's a day out of the school building! I wasn't expecting to learn anything!

RACQUEL: Then why did you come?

ANDY: Two words: "Snack bar." Who's with me??

NATALIE: I don't know, Andy. Mr. Matthews said he's going to give us a quiz tomorrow over what we learn today. Maybe we should stick around and listen.

ANDY: Okay, Natalie's out. More food for me. (*Nudging LINK.*) Hey, you.

LINK reacts as though he's been shoved. LINK lowers the video game indignantly.

LINK: You just made me fall off a cliff!

ANDY: Cool. Wanna hit up the snack bar?

LINK: (*Gesturing to the game.*) I am now a pancake!

ANDY: Mmmm. Pancakes sound good. I missed breakfast. Let's go!

LINK: Do you even know my name?

PHILLIPS enters from upstage left wearing a crossbody bag. PHILLIPS crosses to ANDY, LINK, NATALIE, MILO, and RACQUEL.

ANDY: Does it matter? Dude! Come on! Pancakes!

PHILLIPS loudly clears her throat.

PHILLIPS: Hello, friends. I am Mr./Mrs. Sylvester/Sylvia Phillips. I'll be your tour guide on today's jaunt through time.

PHILLIPS places a hand on ANDY'S shoulder.

PHILLIPS: And while I would love to say "let them eat cake," or in this case pancakes, sadly I cannot. (*Ominously.*) I know where it leads.

ANDY: Where it leads? (*Patting his hips and stomach; to MILO.*) Is she/he calling me fat??

MILO: No! She's saying you'll end up dead! Like Marie-Antoinette?

ANDY: Aww, come on. I'm not gonna eat that many pancakes.

PHILLIPS: (*To MILO.*) I see we have someone who knows his history!

MILO: (*Deadly serious.*) History is my life.

RACQUEL: Yeah. Even though everyone in it is dead.

PHILLIPS: (*To RACQUEL.*) That's what you think! Here at the Living History Museum, we've made it our mission to find ways of bringing history to life. I think you'll find you're in for a surprise.

LINK: Is there a video game version of this tour?

PHILLIPS: Well... no.

LINK: Then I'm not surprised.

PHILLIPS: You do realize that not every historical moment occurred on a screen?

LINK: Just the good ones.

PHILLIPS: Oh really?

LINK ticks them off on his fingers.

LINK: Assassination of JFK, fall of the Berlin Wall, O.J. Simpson trials, 1969 moon landing—

PHILLIPS: But what about—

LINK: And that last one was actually a huge fraud.

RACQUEL: (To LINK.) The moon landing? Really?

LINK: It was filmed on a green screen in Hollywood.

PHILLIPS: (With a sigh.) I can see I've got my work cut out for me. Come now, children! There is much to see and even more to learn. Let's not waste any time. Antiquity awaits!

PHILLIPS gestures for ANDY, LINK, RACQUEL, NATALIE, and MILO to exit stage left.

NATALIE: (To ANDY.) What awaits?

ANDY: I don't know. But it doesn't sound edible.

ANDY, NATALIE, LINK, and RACQUEL exit stage left. MILO looks to MR./MRS. PHILLIPS.

MILO: I would like to apologize on behalf of my entire generation. They will not make this easy on you.

MILO exits stage left. PHILLIPS looks back at the WORKER with a smile.

PHILLIPS: Hmmmm. Let's have a little fun with this group, shall we?

WORKER jumps up eagerly and reaches for the telephone.

WORKER: All right! I was hoping you would say that!

PHILLIPS: But, [insert WORKER'S real name]?

WORKER: Yeah?

PHILLIPS: No dinosaurs this time. We're a museum of anthropology, not archaeology.

WORKER: Awww.

PHILLIPS exits stage left.

WORKER: I knew I should have taken that job at the Natural History Museum.

Lights fade. End of Scene.

SCENE 2

ANTIQUITY DISPLAY AT THE LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM

AT START: A dark stage. *PHILLIPS speaks into a microphone.*

PHILLIPS: Since the beginning, man has always been driven by discovery. Our human civilization began as humble hunters and gatherers. Then, we became farmers, which led to the beginnings of cities. From these early civilizations sprang three of the greatest empires in history: the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans.

Lights rise. Lighting option: Lights rise on each group onstage as PHILLIPS mentions them: Egyptians, HATSHEPSUT and CLEOPATRA at downstage right, Greeks, SOCRATES, LEONIDAS, HOMER and ALEXANDER THE GREAT at downstage left, and Romans, AUGUSTUS, SPARTACUS and NERO at upstage center.

Large Roman columns stand at downstage left and downstage right, optional. PHILLIPS, MILO, NATALIE, LINK, RACQUEL, and ANDY stand at center stage. HATSHEPSUT and CLEOPATRA stand positioned as statues at downstage right. ALEXANDER THE GREAT, HOMER, SOCRATES, and LEONIDAS stand positioned as statues along downstage left. NERO, SPARTACUS, and AUGUSTUS stand positioned as statues at upstage center.

ANDY: Whoa, whoa, wait a minute. Where are all the dinosaurs??

PHILLIPS: (*Sighing.*) Here we go with the dinosaurs again.

MILO: Mr./Mrs. Phillips? Allow me.

MILO turns to ANDY.

MILO: Andy, this is the Living History Museum, a museum that focuses on anthropology.

NATALIE: Anthropologie? I love that store!

MILO: Anthropology is not a store. It's the study of human society and culture. We're here to learn about the accomplishments of man, not giant lizards.

LINK: Man, you are just one huge, walking Wikipedia article, aren't you?

RACQUEL: Excuse me? Why does everyone keep talking about man? There were women back in history too, you know.

PHILLIPS: Yes, there most certainly were. In fact, that's where we are about to start. With the Egyptians. (*Gesturing to stage right.*) Right this way.

PHILLIPS, MILO, NATALIE, LINK, and RACQUEL move toward stage right. Lighting option: lower lights on upstage center. ANDY moves towards stage left, pausing in front of the "statue" of ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

ANDY: Hey. Who's this guy?

NATALIE: Andy, weren't you listening? She said walk right this way, not left this way.

PHILLIPS: (*To ANDY.*) That, young man/lady, would be none other than Alexander the Great, an important figure in the Macedonian Empire. But we will get to him shortly.

ANDY circles ALEXANDER THE GREAT, studying him. ALEXANDER THE GREAT stands frozen like a statue.

ANDY: Alexander the Great? He doesn't look so great to me. Look at him. He's just a kid! He's probably the same age as my older brother.

PHILLIPS: Alexander the Great may have been young, but by the age of 20, he had already become king and would go on to unite the Greeks and conquer the Persian Empire.

RACQUEL: (To ANDY.) Whereas you, Andy, by the age of 20, will probably still be trying to graduate high school.

PHILLIPS: Now if you could all please join me over here in Ancient Egypt.

ANDY joins PHILLIPS, MILO, NATALIE, LINK, and RACQUEL at stage right. Lighting option: lower lights on stage left.

PHILLIPS: Ancient Egypt, located along the Nile River in Northern Africa, was one of the greatest and most powerful civilizations in the history of the world. Lasting over 3000 years from 3150 BC to 30 BC., Ancient Egypt was divided into three major kingdoms called—

MILO: The Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom!

PHILLIPS: Precisely!

LINK: (To MILO.) Hey. Nerd. Relax. There are no brownie points here.

ANDY: Brownies?! Where??

RACQUEL points at HATSHEPSUT.

RACQUEL: I thought you said we would be moving on to some women in history. Who's this dude?

PHILLIPS: That's no dude. That would be Hatshepsut, the most powerful female pharaoh. She stepped in to rule for her young nephew Thutmose III. Hatshepsut remained in power for over 20 years, dressing like a pharaoh to maintain her authority. She even wore a fake beard and a short kilt like the men wore.

RACQUEL: And her name is WHAT?

PHILLIPS: Hatshepsut.

RACQUEL: Hat- WHAT??

PHILLIPS: Hatshepsut.

RACQUEL: Hat-sheep-suit?

PHILLIPS: No. Hatshepsut!

RACQUEL looks back at HATSHEPSUT.

RACQUEL: Girl, kudos on the leadership skills, but you got a raw deal on that name.

MILO: You think that's strange? Hatshepsut was married to her stepbrother.

RACQUEL: What?! Ew! No way.

PHILLIPS: It's true. It sounds strange today, but in order to keep the royal line pure, intermarriage was common for Egyptian royalty.

NATALIE crosses to CLEOPATRA, who is holding a snake at her throat.

NATALIE: Forget the sheep suit and the gross marriage customs. I want to know who this is. I love her eye makeup!

PHILLIPS: Ah, yes. Who doesn't love Cleopatra, princess of Egypt? Her family, the Ptolemy Dynasty, ruled Egypt for 300 years and were put in power by none other than...?

PHILLIPS looks at ANDY.

ANDY: Aliens?

MILO smacks his face and shakes his head.

LINK: *(Without looking up from his video game.)* Yeah. Aliens. The same ones who built Stonehenge.

PHILLIPS: *(With a sigh.)* I suppose I should consider this job security. Let's ask our resident junior expert. Milo?

MILO: The Ptolemy Dynasty was instituted by none other than Alexander the Great. *(To ANDY.)* Otherwise known as your homeboy.

ANDY: Meh. He's not so great.

ANDY glances back toward stage left. ALEXANDER THE GREAT is gone.

ANDY: Hey. Where did he go??

But no one is listening to ANDY. EVERYONE on stage is facing stage right, listening to PHILLIPS. LINK is still playing his/her video game.

PHILLIPS: At the age of eighteen, Cleopatra and her ten-year-old brother Ptolemy XIII were wed—

RACQUEL: Eww! Again?!

PHILLIPS: And declared co-rulers of Egypt. Of course, once Ptolemy grew older, he decided he wanted all the power and forced his sister from the palace.

LINK: And this is why we hate younger brothers.

RACQUEL: And definitely don't marry them!

PHILLIPS: Well, don't worry. This older sister got the last laugh. She teamed up with Julius Caesar—

NATALIE: Wait. I know that name!

PHILLIPS: I should hope so!

NATALIE: He invented a salad, right?

RACQUEL: No. It was a smoothie. Orange Julius?

ANDY: Oh, man. Can we stop talking about food? I am so hungry!

MILO: (To PHILLIPS.) Maybe you should just finish the story.

PHILLIPS: With Julius Caesar's help, Cleopatra sneaked back into the palace hidden inside a rolled-up carpet and convinced Caesar to help her take back her throne.

ANDY: Did it work?

PHILLIPS: Indeed. Caesar defeated Ptolemy's army at the Battle of the Nile.

ANDY: Cool. And what happened to the little brother?

PHILLIPS: He drowned in the Nile River trying to escape.

RACQUEL: Whoa. That's cold.

NATALIE: So Cleopatra got her throne back?

PHILLIPS: Yes, with the help of Julius Caesar. The two of them fell in love and had a child together named Caesarion.

RACQUEL: These people really needed some help in naming their children!

NATALIE: Aww, so it's a love story!

MILO: Not exactly.

PHILLIPS: He's right. In 44 BC, Julius Caesar was assassinated.

ANDY: Assassinated?! Just like Abe Lincoln and JFK? They did that back then??

MILO: Hey! Look at you. I'm surprised you knew that. Good job, Andy!

ANDY: Yeah, well, I remember the interesting parts of history. Like when people get killed.

LINK holds up one hand for a high five while continuing to play his video game. ANDY gives LINK a high five. RACQUEL points to CLEOPATRA.

RACQUEL: So what's the deal with the snake?

PHILLIPS: That comes later. After the death of Julius Caesar, one of the three leaders to emerge in Rome was Marc Antony. In 41 BC, Cleopatra and Marc Antony met and fell in love.

NATALIE: Wait, what?! She just totally forgot about Julius Caesar? Just like that??

MILO: Come on, Natalie. She had three years to mourn him.

NATALIE: They had a kid together! And he gave her a kingdom!

MILO: (To PHILLIPS.) Natalie's a little bit of a romantic.

PHILLIPS: Then she should love what comes next. Natalie, have you ever heard of Romeo and Juliet?

NATALIE: Sure. It's that movie—

LINK: Pretty sure it's a play by Shakespeare.

MILO: Based on historical events in Italy in the 1500s.

NATALIE: Whatever. It's that movie where the guy and the girl fall in love and—wait a minute. Are you saying...?!

PHILLIPS: Yes. You see, Cleopatra wanted her son Caesarion to be Caesar's heir and to eventually rule Rome. So she and Marc Antony went to war against Octavian, the grandnephew, adopted son, and legal heir of Julius Caesar.

RACQUEL: And?

PHILLIPS: They lost.

MILO: At the Battle of Actium.

LINK: (To MILO.) Seriously, dude, there are no brownie points. (To ANDY, as ANDY opens his mouth to speak.) Or brownies.

NATALIE: That's what she gets for betraying Caesar.

PHILLIPS: The story's not over.

LINK: Why am I not surprised?

PHILLIPS: After Marc Antony received the false news that Cleopatra had died, he killed himself.

NATALIE: He did WHAT?!

PHILLIPS: Then when Cleopatra heard that Antony was dead, she killed herself (*Gesturing to the snake in CLEOPATRA'S hand.*) by allowing a poisonous cobra to bite her.

ANDY: Whoa! Props for the killer exit strategy!

PHILLIPS: With her death came the end of the Ptolemy Dynasty and the Egyptian Empire. She was the last pharaoh of Ancient Egypt.

MILO, ANDY, NATALIE, RACQUEL, and PHILLIPS are looking at CLEOPATRA. LINK is looking at his video game. No one notices HATSHEPSUT speak.

HATSHEPSUT: And the cause of the fall of Egypt.

NATALIE: (*To RACQUEL.*) Did you just say something?

RACQUEL: (*To NATALIE.*) That wasn't me. I thought that was you.

CLEOPATRA unfreezes and lowers the snakes at her throat.

CLEOPATRA: (*To HATSHEPSUT.*) I know you did not just say that!

ANDY points to CLEOPATRA.

ANDY: Dude! That statue just talked!

LINK: (*Looking up from his video game.*) What?? No way.

CLEOPATRA and HATSHEPSUT unfreeze and turn to face each other. During the fight, PHILLIPS sneaks off, stage left.

CLEOPATRA: (*To HATSHEPSUT.*) I was the best thing that ever happened to Egypt and you know it.

HATSHEPSUT: You mean you were the last thing that ever happened to Egypt. After you, the Empire fell! All my hard work, wasted!

CLEOPATRA: Your hard work? Who built up our nation's economy? Who created alliances with all the neighboring nations?

HATSHEPSUT: Yes. We know all about your “alliances.” Julius Caesar, Mark Antony... It was these ridiculous alliances that ruined us!

CLEOPATRA: You're just jealous.

HATSHEPSUT: Jealous? Of what?!

CLEOPATRA: You're jealous that I had love and you never did!

MILO: Mr./Mrs. Phillips? Care to step in here before—(*Looks around for PHILLIPS.*) Hey. Where did he/she go?

HATSHEPSUT: (*To CLEOPATRA.*) Love is what made you weak. You are the weakest ruler that Egypt ever had.

CLEOPATRA: Weak?! Does death by serpent sound weak to you??

HATSHEPSUT: It was the coward's way out and you know it.

CLEOPATRA holds her serpent out threateningly at HATSHEPSUT.

CLEOPATRA: Then perhaps you'd like to give it a try?

NATALIE: Andy! Do something! Before they kill each other!

RACQUEL: How can they kill each other? Aren't they already dead?

ANDY steps between HATSHEPSUT and CLEOPATRA.

ANDY: (*To HATSHEPSUT and CLEOPATRA.*) Ladies, ladies, please. Can't we settle this disagreement in a more civilized fashion? No need for a catfight.

CLEOPATRA: A catfight?!

HATSHEPSUT: Who would fight with cats? Cats are sacred!

CLEOPATRA: (*To HATSHEPSUT.*) Don't be so dim-witted. It's not the cats that are sacred. It's the gods or goddesses that may inhabit them.

HATSHEPSUT: What do you know about gods and goddesses?

CLEOPATRA: I am the reincarnation of the Egyptian goddess Isis!

HATSHEPSUT: Right. If you are the reincarnation of the goddess Isis, then I really am a sheep suit!

ANDY steps out of the line of fire as HATSHEPSUT and CLEOPATRA continue arguing silently.

ANDY: Well, I'm fresh out of ideas. Anybody else wanna give it a try?

MILO: *(To ANDY.)* If you're looking for ideas, maybe we should check out the Greeks. They were known for their wisdom and intelligence.

ANDY: And their gyros! Let's go find some Greek food! I mean, Greek dudes.

ANDY, LINK, RACQUEL, and NATALIE exit stage left.

MILO: *(Sighing.)* I think I'm beginning to see why our tour guide took off.

MILO exits stage left. Lights fade. End of Scene.

SCENE 3

ANTIQUITY DISPLAY AT THE LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM

AT START: *Lights rise. ANDY, LINK, RACQUEL, MILO and NATALIE stand at center stage. PHILLIPS now stands at stage left next to HOMER, SOCRATES, and LEONIDAS. HOMER is posed in a seated "Thinker" position. Only NERO and SPARTACUS now stand positioned as statues at upstage center.*

MILO: Hey! It's our tour guide!

PHILLIPS: Welcome to Ancient Greece, the foundation of much of our Western culture today. Everything from philosophy, government, science, mathematics, art, literature, even sports was impacted by the Ancient Greeks.

NATALIE: Mr. / Mrs. Phillips, where were you?

RACQUEL: Yeah! You totally missed it! Those two Egyptian chicks came to life and were about to go at it with snakes!

ANDY looks around stage left in confusion.

ANDY: Wait a minute. We're missing somebody over here.

PHILLIPS: Please save all stories, no matter how colorful, until the end of the tour, thank you.

ANDY: But—!

PHILLIPS: The city-states of Ancient Greece flourished from about 1200 BC until the death of Alexander the Great, in 323 BC.

ANDY: That guy! That's the one who's missing!

NATALIE: See?? Mr. / Mrs. Phillips, we're not making this up!

PHILLIPS: (*Ignoring them.*) Historians often divide up the history of ancient Greece into three periods. First, the Archaic Period, which included the introduction of democracy, the start of the Olympic Games, and Homer's writing of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

PHILLIPS places a hand on HOMER's shoulder.

ANDY: Homer?

LINK: Not Homer Simpson. Don't even ask.

ANDY: Oh. Bummer.

PHILLIPS crosses to SOCRATES and LEONIDAS.

PHILLIPS: Next came the Classical Period. During this period, much of Ancient Greece was ruled by two main city states: Athens and Sparta. These two city states couldn't have been more different. Athens was governed by a democracy and great philosophers like Socrates and Plato arose. The Athenians prioritized learning and the arts while Sparta focused almost exclusively on war and how to fight. If you were back in Ancient Greece, which side would you fall on?

PHILLIPS pulls a stack of red and blue pinnies out of his/her crossbody bag.

ANDY: All right! Color wars! Team Sparta all the way!

ANDY grabs a red pinny and moves to stand beside LEONIDAS.

MILO: (*To ANDY.*) Of course you would. Well, if we're choosing sides, I'm clearly Team Athens.

MILO grabs a blue pinny. RACQUEL shrugs and grabs a red pinny.

RACQUEL: I'll go with Sparta.

RACQUEL crosses to join ANDY.

MILO: What? Really??

LINK walks over to PHILLIPS, grabs a red pinny, and wordlessly crosses to ANDY and RACQUEL, still playing his video game.

MILO: Link? You too?

MILO, ANDY, RACQUEL, and PHILLIPS turn to NATALIE.

NATALIE: Oh, don't look at me. I'm a pacifist vegan. I don't choose sides.

MILO: Of course not.

NATALIE: (*Hopefully.*) But I'll take a purple pinny if you have one.

PHILLIPS: I don't.

PHILLIPS turns to ANDY, RACQUEL, and LINK.

PHILLIPS: Spartans, allow me to introduce you to your legendary king—

ANDY: (*Booming.*) Arthur!!

LINK: Nope. He's English.

PHILLIPS: (*Miffed.*) If I may? Spartans, allow me to introduce you to your legendary king—

ANDY: Achilles!

RACQUEL: (*To ANDY.*) Dude. Does everything you know about history come from movies??

MILO: Well, he's getting closer. At least Achilles was a Greek. But he was also just a legend, a myth. He's the famous warrior from Homer's *Iliad*.

ANDY: Homer?

LINK: Still not Homer Simpson. Don't even ask.

ANDY: Oh. Bummer.

PHILLIPS: Might I finish?!

MILO: Oh, of course. Sorry.

PHILLIPS: *(In a rush.)* Spartans! Allow me to introduce you to your legendary king, Leonidas!

MILO, ANDY, RACQUEL, and NATALIE look at LEONIDAS. Even LINK looks up from his video game at LEONIDAS as PHILLIPS quietly exits, stage right.

LINK: I thought he'd be bigger.

LINK returns to his video game.

MILO: *(Reading from a placard on the floor.)* It says here that during this Classical Period, wars between Sparta and Athens occurred.

MILO looks up at LEONIDAS, ANDY, RACQUEL, and LINK and then down at his own pinny.

MILO: Uh oh.

From behind ANDY, RACQUEL, and LINK, LEONIDAS comes to life, his booming voice startling the video game out of LINK'S hand.

LEONIDAS: Spartans! Apprehend the Athenian!

MILO: *(In a squeaky, terrified voice.)* Uh, Mrs./Mr. Phillips?!

MILO turns around to see PHILLIPS has left.

MILO: Of course she/he did.

LEONIDAS: ATTACK!

ANDY: Seriously? All right! I've been waiting all day to do this! Well, that and eat.

NATALIE: Andy, don't!

ANDY: BONSAI!!!

ANDY leaps into the air. MILO lets out a strangled cry as ANDY tackles MILO to the ground. MILO groans.

MILO: I knew that PE credit would never come in handy.

LEONIDAS: Bring the Athenian to me!

ANDY stands, pulls MILO to his feet, and drags MILO over to LEONIDAS. LEONIDAS glances over at NATALIE and points to her.

LEONIDAS: Now free the prisoner!

NATALIE looks around in confusion.

NATALIE: Prisoner? Oh, you mean me? I'm not a prisoner. I'm a conscientious objector. But please, carry on with your little war.

LEONIDAS: Helot!

NATALIE: Excuse me? *(Turning to ANDY.)* What did he just call me??

ANDY: I don't know. It's all Greek to me.

LEONIDAS: *(To NATALIE.)* Helot, take these ridiculous red costumes from my men and burn them in the fire. Then bring me my midday meal. I am famished.

ANDY, LINK, and RACQUEL take off their red pinnies and hand them to NATALIE. She looks at them for a moment and then drops them on the floor.

ANDY: What do you know? Me too! I like this guy!

MILO: *(Reading from a placard on the floor.)* Uh, Natalie? It would appear that Leonidas has mistaken you for a Helot.

NATALIE: A what?

MILO: A Helot. Fellow Greeks who had been conquered by the Spartans and turned into... slaves.

NATALIE: Slaves?!

MILO: It says here that the Spartans' way of life would not have been possible without the Helots. They handled all the day-to-day tasks and unskilled labor required to keep a society functioning.

NATALIE: But I'm not a slave!

LEONIDAS: Spartans! Silence this Athenian! All they know how to do is talk.

ANDY: Gladly!

ANDY shoves the end of MILO'S scarf in his mouth and then turns to NATALIE.

ANDY: And I'll take a cheeseburger and fries, if you're taking orders, Natalie.

NATALIE: *(Coldly.)* I'm not.

SOCRATES unfreezes and turns to LEONIDAS.

SOCRATES: Leonidas. We meet at last.

RACQUEL: *(To LINK.)* Hey. Look! We got another live one!

LINK doesn't look up from his video game.

LINK: Big deal.

LEONIDAS: Stand down, Athenian. We are taking the boy. You are sadly outnumbered.

SOCRATES: You of all people should know, Leonidas, that numbers don't mean anything.

RACQUEL: Huh? I don't get it.

HOMER unfreezes and turns to RACQUEL.

HOMER: Leonidas took just 300 Spartan soldiers into the battle of Thermopylae. They died protecting the rest of Greece from the Persian invasion. 480 BC.

RACQUEL: Oh. Thank you. *(A beat.)* Hey! You can talk too?! Who are you?

HOMER: In Greek, my name means "he who cannot see." But you may call me Homer.

ANDY turns to HOMER, arms open.

ANDY: Homer!

LINK: Still not Simpson.

SOCRATES: Leonidas, let us discuss the matter of the boy. Clearly, he is not an Athenian. Look at his clothes, his hair, his shoes. He is certainly not one of us and therefore does not deserve to be taken captive.

LEONIDAS: Not an Athenian?? Have you heard the lad speak? He never shuts his mouth!

ANDY pokes MILO in the side.

ANDY: Look at that, Milo. He's got you pegged already!

SOCRATES: (To **LEONIDAS**.) Well, if I cannot persuade you with logic, Leonidas, I suppose we shall have to resort to other means.

LEONIDAS: Other means? You mean you want to fight me? Me?? Leonidas of Sparta? Who are you anyway?

SOCRATES: I am Socrates, a philosopher and lover of truth.

LINK: Truth? "What is truth?"

LEONIDAS: Don't get him started!

SOCRATES: Leonidas, in order to save lives and limbs, I propose a battle of champions.

RACQUEL: (To **HOMER**.) I think we're about to see a fight!

HOMER: Sadly, not I. I cannot see, remember?

RACQUEL: Oh! You were serious about that?? Wait. I thought you were the epic poet of Ancient Greece. How could you write if you couldn't see?

HOMER: Oral tradition, my dear.

RACQUEL: Oral... tradition?

MILO tries to speak through his gag but his words come out muffled.

ANDY: What's that, Milo? You got something to say?

ANDY pulls the scarf out of MILO'S mouth.

MILO: Homer didn't write down the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. He narrated them and scholars wrote them down.

LEONIDAS: (*Scoffing.*) And you claim the boy is not an Athenian! Silence him!

MILO: Wait! No! Not again!

ANDY shoves the end of MILO'S scarf back into his mouth.

LEONIDAS: *(To SOCRATES.)* I accept your challenge. A battle of champions for the boy it shall be!

RACQUEL: Look, Milo! You're finally getting popular!

LINK: Notice that started when he stopped talking.

SOCRATES: Let us commence.

LEONIDAS and SOCRATES move into the center of stage left and position themselves as if about to fight. ANDY, RACQUEL, LINK, and NATALIE surround them, all but NATALIE chanting quietly. NATALIE stands there looking nervous.

ANDY, RACQUEL, and LINK: Fight, fight, fight, fight!

SOCRATES: Fight? Don't be ridiculous. I'm an Athenian. We use our minds to fight.

ANDY: What? No battle?!

SOCRATES: Oh, there will be a battle. A battle of words! A debate!

ANDY, RACQUEL, LINK, and NATALIE exchange glances. After a moment, they begin chanting hesitantly.

ANDY, LINK, and NATALIE: Debate, debate, debate, debate!

RACQUEL: *(Nudging HOMER.)* Homer! Are you seeing this?!

HOMER clears his throat.

RACQUEL: Oh. Sorry.

LEONIDAS: And what shall be the topic of this debate? The art of war? The virtues of endurance and self-control?

SOCRATES: No. What we need is a neutral moderator to choose the topic. And I know just the person.

FRONT DESK WORKER'S voice comes over a microphone with booming energy. MILO, RACQUEL, NATALIE, LINK, and ANDY look around in surprise.

WORKER: Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, beloved as a ruler while he was alive and celebrated as a legend after his death, give it up for the most famous Greek personality ever, Alexander the Great!

SOUND FX: Game show music, optional. ALEXANDER THE GREAT enters from the back of the house like a celebrity, walking down the aisle toward the stage, waving to the audience, shaking hands, and blowing kisses.

NATALIE: Helloooooo! Who do we have here?

ANDY: Not this guy again!

MILO begins to jump up and down excitedly. MILO tries to speak through his gag but his words come out muffled.

ANDY: Oh, okay, fine. Keep your shirt on.

ANDY pulls the scarf out of MILO'S mouth.

MILO: It's Alexander the Great! Come to life! This is like... a dream come true!

LINK: You need better dreams.

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