THE LAST GOAT

written by Gary Graves

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

KORI: 20.

MELINA: Kori's grandmother, 60s.

NIKOLIS: around 30. Also, PROFESSOR BULL, an academic.

SETTING

The action takes place in what was once the Great Hall of a very old house on the Greek island of Kasos, in the eastern Aegean, in the 12th century BC.

NOTE

We're in the period archeologists commonly refer to as the "Late Bronze Age Collapse," named for the relatively sudden and widespread collapse of the previously thriving civilizations in the broader Mediterranean region, some three thousand years ago. Suffice it to say, we are in the distant past, but these characters dress in clothes we might see today. They are Greeks, but they speak English, as if they were people in our contemporary world, although their circumstances are entirely different from ours--or are they?

PROLOGUE

(PROFESSOR BULL, a pompous academic, with a heavy accent, gives a slide presentation.)

BULL

Observe the period we archeologists commonly refer to as “The Late Bronze Age Collapse." We call it that because of the relatively sudden and widespread “collapse” of the previously thriving civilizations all around the broader Mediterranean region, some three thousand years ago. Now, we don't exactly know what caused this collapse, but we’re reasonably certain it did indeed happen. Environmental change? Mass migration? Runaway warfare? Disease? All of the above? We just don’t exactly know. My colleague Professor Cline's “Eleven Seventy-seven B.C.--The Year Civilization Collapsed” even goes so far as to imagine the very year it was when everything began to go irretrievably to hell: Eleven Seventy-seven B.C. Yes, another seven centuries would have to pass, what we call the “Greek Dark Ages,” before the re-emergence of so-called “civilization,” the glorious “Golden Age of Greece” we’re all so familiar with, eh? Eleven Seventy-seven B.C. Over three thousand years ago. The distant past, suffice it to say.

(Blackout.

The sound of traveling back in time about 3000 years.)

1 A NEW DAY 1

(Sunrise in the Great Hall of a very old residence.

An empty fireplace and stone mantle at one end of the room.

Sunlight streams in through large windows, overlooking a view of the island and the Eastern Aegean in the distance.

Only two stone benches furnish the room.

There is a water pitcher--of ancient Greek design--full of water for drinking.

MELINA enters from elsewhere in the old house, at the start of a long hard day of subsistence farming.

She sits on one of the benches, and hangs her head, exhausted, still asleep.

A bird calls outside.

MELINA hears the bird's call, and seems to awaken.

The bird calls again.

She rises and looks for the bird, outside, as the sun rises, and breaks through the windows in the old house.

She cannot see the bird outside, but she senses a presence, the presence of a goddess.)

MELINA
(to the goddess)
What do you want from us?
(beat)
Haven't we suffered enough?
(beat)
What else could I do?
(beat)
Enough.
(beat)
Help us. Please.

(No answer from the bird.

A moment of despair.

Then she gets an idea, and exits. *

KORI, 20, enters from the house, dressed for work in the fields. She is even more exhausted than Melina. She sits on a bench, and hangs her head, still asleep.)

MELINA returns with a basket of food, * including some pita-style flatbreads, a * bunch of quail eggs, etc., an offering. *

Goes to KORI.

MELINA (cont'd)
Good, you're up. Let's get at it.

(KORI lies on her side, and curls up on the bench to go back to sleep.)

MELINA (cont'd)
Wake up. There's work to do.

(No reply from the sleeping girl.)

MELINA sets the offering down, and * heaves KORI back up to a sitting position.)

MELINA (cont'd)
Wake up.

(KORI sinks back down onto the bench, back to sleep.

MELINA sighs.) *

MELINA (cont'd)
Eat.

KORI
Sleep. *

MELINA takes a pita bread from the basket, puts it in one of Kori's hands, and sits her back up on the bench.)

MELINA
Eat. Work. Then sleep. And hope for pleasant dreams.
(KORI groans.)
Do I have to chew it for ya, too?

(KORI takes a bite of the pita bread, chews it, and swallows.)

KORI
It's good.

MELINA
You're damn right it's good.

KORI
I just wanna go back to sleep. Please.

MELINA
(offers her the quail eggs)
Here. Have one of these little beauties.

KORI
(doesn't like raw egs)
Ugh.

MELINA
Suit yourself.
(looks out the window)
Listen to me. Before I get back, clean the chicken coop. I already got the quail eggs.

KORI
Obviously.

MELINA
Don't be a smart ass. Are you gonna fish today?

KORI
Yes.

MELINA
Before you do that, sow some more beans. Weed and water the plot. Thoroughly. They're getting leaves. Thin 'em to half a foot. And weed the olives.

KORI
All of 'em?

MELINA
Yes, all of 'em.

KORI
Do you know how long that will take?

MELINA
Yes, I do, I've done it a thousand times, and that was before you were even born, since then I've done it more times than you can count to, so yes I know how long it will take, any more questions?
(beat)
Good, then just do it before you go fishing today.

(KORI drinks from the water pitcher.)

MELINA (cont'd)
And milk the goat. And when you're done with that, thresh the wheat. *

KORI
Anything else?

MELINA
Yeah. Bring in some carrots, some cabbage, and some cucumbers. I'll check on the wine myself later today.

KORI
Of course, you will.

MELINA
What's that supposed to mean?
(beat)
You think I don't pull my weight around here?

KORI
It's too much.

MELINA
You wanna eat?

KORI
It's too much.

MELINA
Be glad for what we got.

KORI
What's the point.

MELINA
No more of that. You hear me?

KORI
I'm tired, Yaya. My hands, my back, my knees, my feet. I just want to sleep.

MELINA
Sure, you do, Princess. You think this is bad? Ha! Try starving to death.
(beat)
Just quit complaining, and get to work. *

(MELINA starts out.)

KORI
Where are you going?

MELINA
Down to the cove. She wants an offering. *

KORI
How do you know?
(a look from MELINA) *
She spoke to you? *

MELINA
Right when the sun came up. *

(MELINA nods, yes, and exits with the offering, out the glass doors, and off. *

KORI watches her grandmother disappear into the distance.)

KORI
(to herself)
I hate you.

(She looks around the room.)

KORI (cont'd)
I don't want to die here.

(She steels herself for another long, exhausting day of work, and exits into the house.

Someone approaches outside: NIKOLIS.

He staggers up to the glass doors, and looks in.

He is filthy, barefoot, his clothes--barely recognizable as military fatigues, torn and frayed from a shipwreck and wanderings on the island.

He enters through the glass doors, exhausted, looking rather desperate.

He looks around at the grand structure of the room.)

NIKOLIS

Wow.

(He sees the pitcher.

Snatches it, looks in.

Sniffs it.

Tastes it, carefully.

Gasps, savoring the taste of pure water.

Thirstily, he gulps down a huge drink of the precious elixir.

So much, so fast, his gut begins to ache as his dehydrated body absorbs the water.

He groans.

Holds his gut.

Sits on the floor.

Lays back.

And passes out.

KORI enters from another part of the house with a basket for carrying vegetables.

Shocked, she freezes when she discovers a man in the house--unconscious on the floor!

He doesn’t wake.

Cautiously, she sets the empty basket down, and silently sneaks back out of the room.

He stirs, but doesn't wake.

Cautiously still, KORI returns, but now with a huge deadly-looking dagger [of ancient Greek design].

Dagger at the ready, she circles the man on the floor--looks out the windows to see if there are any others with him.

KORI
(to herself)
Yaya.

(Back to the strange man on the floor.

She moves closer, cautiously, looking him over.

He begins to snore, startling her.

Dagger in hand, she moves closer, to get a better look.

He wakes.

Both are startled.

Both recover.

A face off.

She has a dagger.

He has nothing.

Beat.)

KORI (cont'd)
Who are you?
(beat)
Greek?

NIKOLIS
Are you... a goddess?

KORI
What?

(He moves.

KORI reacts, ready with the dagger.

She makes it clear he is to keep his distance from her.

He raises his hands, palms out--no threat.)

NIKOLIS
You're Greek. And you're alive. Here in front of me. I thought I was a dead man.

KORI
What are you doing here?

NIKOLIS
I...I...
(he looks at his clothes)
You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

KORI
(repeating)
What are you doing here?

NIKOLIS
I was shipwrecked. On the other side of the island.
(pointing)
Over the mountain there. I've been wandering for days. What island is this?
(beat)
There's nothing on it. Nobody. Not another soul. But you. Here in this house. What is this place? You have water. You're growing food out there. You have animals. Where is everyone? *
(beat)
Just you? How is that possible?

KORI
I have six brothers.

NIKOLIS
Six?

KORI
Mm-hm.

NIKOLIS
Ah. That explains it. Where are they?

KORI
Out...working. In the field. They'll be back any minute.

NIKOLIS
Well. I look forward to meeting them. I'm sorry, I...
(looks where he came in)
I was just so thirsty. I've been walking for days. In that sun.

KORI
I can walk the length of the island in less than a day. How many days?

NIKOLIS
Well, maybe yesterday, when the sun came up, and last night, and today. Two days. Believe me, I was thirsty. I'm sorry I came in without your invitation. I'll go.

(He starts to leave.)

KORI
Hold it.

(He stops.)

KORI (cont'd)
You were shipwrecked?

NIKOLIS
I was, indeed.

KORI
Where's your boat?

NIKOLIS
My boat?
(beat)
It went down in the sea.

KORI
And why did it do that?

NIKOLIS
This is the part you won't believe.
(beat)
I was attacked.

KORI
By who?

NIKOLIS
Not by who. By what? A monster of some kind.

KORI
A monster?

NIKOLIS
I don't know what it was. Though I've heard of such things. Such... creatures.

KORI
What did it look like?

NIKOLIS
A monstrous thing, with tentacles, like an octopus, but as big as a house, latched itself onto my vessel and set about... dragging the whole thing under... all at once. And me with it.

KORI
And?

NIKOLIS
And the next thing I know he's got hold of me. With his tentacles. Around my waist, and my arms, and my neck, and he's strangling me and all I had...was a knife. And I just started stabbing him with it. I just kept at him. Again, and again, and again. And blood is spurting red, gushing, oozing in the water, all around us both, and the boat slips away, just... slips away beneath the waves, and down we go, but I'm still jabbing away at this bastard, till suddenly, this big giant thing just lets go o' me, and darts away. *

KORI
And?

NIKOLIS
And there I was. Out in the waves. In the night. Blackest night. Where am I? I have no idea. What do I do?

KORI
I don't know--what did you do?

NIKOLIS
I don't know.

KORI
You don't know?

NIKOLIS
Some... god. Or goddess. I think I know who it was. Some god carried me here.

KORI
Here?

NIKOLIS
I woke up on the beach. It was morning. And I was on a beach. On the other side of the island, somewhere. I walked. All across the island. Back and forth. In that sun. It seems like days. There's no water. And then... I found you. And...
(looks at the pitcher)
You have water.
(beat)
And you have six brothers.

KORI
Where's your knife?

NIKOLIS
My knife? I lost it. In the ocean. I think. To tell you the truth... I don't remember.

KORI
You were sailing alone at night?

NIKOLIS
Mm-hm. I prefer it.

KORI
Can you steer by the stars? *

NIKOLIS *
Of course. *

KORI *
Where were you headed?

NIKOLIS
Home.

KORI
And where is that?

NIKOLIS
Have you heard of... Mikonos?

KORI
You're from Mikonos?

NIKOLIS
Have you ever been there?... I am indeed. My family's *
there. We're a... large family. My father's a very wealthy
man. Perhaps you've heard of us? The Andreus? Of Mikonos? *

KORI
Where were you coming from?

NIKOLIS
Well... Ilios.

KORI
From the war?

NIKOLIS
Mm-hm.

KORI
How's it going?

NIKOLIS
It’s over.

KORI
It’s over?

NIKOLIS
Mm-hm.

KORI
Who won?

NIKOLIS
We did.

KORI
We who?

NIKOLIS
The Greeks, girl. Who do you think?

KORI
How did it end?

NIKOLIS
Badly. Very badly. For the people of Ilios.

KORI
How come you’re all alone?

NIKOLIS
Cause I like it that way.

KORI
You sailed from Ilios all by yourself?

NIKOLIS
Why not?

KORI
In what?

NIKOLIS
An Egyptian felucca. You know what that is? There’s no other boat like it in the world.

KORI
And where did you get this Egyptian--what?

NIKOLIS
Felucca.

KORI
Sailboat?

NIKOLIS
The fastest, nimblest, single-masted sailboats in the world.

KORI
And how did you get that?

NIKOLIS
I bought it.

KORI
You bought it.

NIKOLIS
With gold.

KORI
Gold. From where?

NIKOLIS
From Ilios.

KORI
You're a soldier?

NIKOLIS
I was... a captain.

KORI
Not anymore?

NIKOLIS
Like I said, the war's over. I want to get back to Mikonos. And my family.
(beat)
Where are these brothers of yours?

KORI
They should be here any minute.

NIKOLIS
I've been all over this island. I didn't see anybody else. I mean... nobody. Where is everyone?
(beat)
What's your name?

KORI
None of your business.

NIKOLIS
Not very hospitable of you. As one Greek to another?

KORI
What do you want?

NIKOLIS
A little food maybe? A little rest? I mean you no harm.

KORI
You were sailing, all alone, home from Ilios. But you got attacked by a sea monster, and washed up on the beach here.

NIKOLIS
I told you ya wouldn't believe it.
(beat)
Can I at least have another drink of water?

(KORI nods.

NIKOLIS drinks.

MELINA enters through the glass doors.

Sees KORI, with the dagger--doesn't see NIKOLIS.)

MELINA
What are you doing--
(sees Nikolis)

(All stop.)

NIKOLIS
Hello. Madam?

MELINA
Who the hell are you?

NIKOLIS
Well...

MELINA
(to Kori)
What's going on here?

KORI
He says he was shipwrecked.

MELINA
Shipwrecked?
(to Nikolis)
Where?

KORI
On the north side.

MELINA
What do you want here?

NIKOLIS
My name is Nikolis.

KORI
He says he's from Mikonos.

MELINA
(to Nikolis)
I said what do you want here?

NIKOLIS
As I was telling... her--

MELINA
(to Kori)
Are there others?

KORI
I haven't seen any.

NIKOLIS
I'm alone.

MELINA
What are you doing in my house?

NIKOLIS
I don't want--

KORI
He's hungry.

MELINA
I can see that. You say you're from Mikonos?

KORI
He says his father's rich.

MELINA
Is that right. Well, get him to buy you a new pair o' pants, cause those aren't fit for a beggar.

NIKOLIS
Like I told her--

KORI
He says he was sailing home from the war.

(Beat.)

MELINA
How did he get in here?

KORI
I found him on the floor. Asleep.

MELINA
Asleep?

NIKOLIS
I musta passed out.

KORI
He says he was thirsty.

(MELINA looks him in the eye.)

NIKOLIS
Maybe you've heard of my family. Andreus of Mikonos?
(beat)
My father is Nikolis Andreus.
(beat)
I needed a drink of water. I was desperate. I apologized to...

KORI
Kori.

MELINA
(to Kori)
Shut up.
(back to Niko)
What are you doing here all alone?

KORI
He says he's a captain. Was a captain.

MELINA
This is the uniform of a captain?

NIKOLIS
It was. Till I swam ashore, and wandered your island for two days. I was nearly cooked in that sun out there. My father will compensate you handsomely if you show me the simple kindness of a few days rest and recuperation. Some food at least? As one Greek to another?

KORI
He says his boat was wrecked by a sea monster.

MELINA
A sea monster.

NIKOLIS
I don't really know what it was. There are all sorts of things in the sea. Things that can't be explained. Have you ever been at sea?
(MORE)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
(no answer)
You never heard of anything like that?

MELINA
I've heard all sorts of things from men like you.

NIKOLIS
Madam, you hardly know me. My father is Nikolis Andreus. Of Mikonos. I'm an honorable man.

(Beat.)

MELINA
As one Greek to another, you can stay the night. I'll give you dinner. Tomorrow you go.

NIKOLIS
Go where? How?

MELINA
That's your problem.

(Beat.)

NIKOLIS
Then I'll be grateful to you for the meal and the night's rest. Thank you. Where should I--

KORI
Which room?

MELINA
The little one.

KORI
The store room?

MELINA
You'll want a bath first.

NIKOLIS
That's very kind of you. I would love a bath.
(surprised)
You have a bath?

KORI
I'll show you where it is--

MELINA
No, you won't. You'll get on with your work. I'll show you where the bath is. God knows you need it. Wait for me out there, in the hall.

NIKOLIS
Your kindness knows no bounds.

(He exits to the hallway.)

MELINA
(alone with Kori)
Don't get any ideas. He's trouble.

KORI
What if he's...

MELINA
What?

KORI
What if he's... *
(looks out the window) *
a god? *

MELINA
Gimme that. *

(KORI gives her grandmother the dagger.

MELINA starts off, after Niko.)

KORI
He says the war is over.

MELINA
(stops, turns back)
What?

KORI
He says it's over. The war's over.

MELINA
I've heard that before.

KORI
They're all going home. We won. *

MELINA
We who?

KORI
The Greeks. That's what he says.
(beat)
Finally. It's over. You think they'll be others?

(MELINA looks at the dagger, looks at KORI, and exits.

Alone, KORI thinks.

She looks out at the sea in the distance.

She sings a song.

She grabs the basket, and heads outside.

Blackout.) *

2 EVENING 2

(An owl hoots outside.

NIK enters from the house, after dinner. He is transformed, cleaned up now, and dressed handsomely in nice clothes that fit him remarkably well, like a veritable prince.

With a goblet of wine.

He hears the owl hooting outside.

He senses the presence of a god.

After a look over his shoulder, to be certain he's not overheard, he whispers.)

NIKOLIS
Is that you? Are you here?

(The owl hoots.)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
You led me here. Why? This place is... Is it sacred to you? There's everything here. Kori.

(He sings a song.

The owl hoots.)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
Who are you?

(KORI enters from the house, also transformed, after a day of work in the fields, a bath, and a change of clothes. She has changed her hair somehow. Has she applied a bit of make-up?

A beat as they size each other up from a distance.)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
Thanks for dinner. I think that was the best meal I ever ate. I mean it. The food you grow here is... amazing. And the fish. Where did you say the fish came from?

KORI
(glancing at the sea)
Where do you think?

NIKOLIS
Who caught it?

KORI
I did.

NIKOLIS
Amazing.

KORI
Not really.

NIKOLIS
You make bread. You have butter. You have olives. How do you do it? All this. Just you and your grandmother?

KORI
And Thea.

NIKOLIS
Thea?

KORI
Our goat.

NIKOLIS
Oh.
(beat)
Just the one?
(She nods.)
Hm. That's too bad.

KORI
We had a whole herd. That was a long time ago.

NIKOLIS
What happened to 'em?

KORI
They all died. Thea's the last one.

NIKOLIS
What'd they die of?

KORI
We don't know. They just started getting sick. A long time ago. When I got the herd, we had twenty-one head altogether. There was even more than that before. Dogs got some of 'em.

NIKOLIS
Dogs?

KORI
Wild dogs. There's a bunch of 'em out there. There used to be a lion.

NIKOLIS
A lion?

KORI
Mm-hm. She was old. There's a cave up on the mountain. Did you see it?

NIKOLIS
(no)
Ut-uh.

KORI
That was hers. She got some of the goats. But she's gone now. I think the dogs got 'er. Then they just started dying. One after another. Thea lost her baby last spring. *
Now it's just her. Yaya thinks its something that grows here. Some kind of plant that we don't know about, what it is, or what to look for. It poison's 'em. That's what she says.

NIKOLIS
What do you think?
(beat)
Yeah, but those vegetables.

KORI
What?

NIKOLIS
Those vegetables you grow out there. They're amazing. How do you do it? The wheat. The orchard. You have wine!
(drinks)
Ah. This is so good.
(beat)
Some god has blessed this place. It's the water. You have water. Did she say you have the only water on the entire *
island?

KORI
It's a natural spring.
(she points down)

NIKOLIS
That's a blessing.

KORI
Those are my father's clothes, you know.

NIKOLIS
Yeah, your grandmother mentioned that. Lucky fit.

KORI
Hm.
(beat)
What's it like on Mikonos?

NIKOLIS
Hm?

KORI
Mikonos. What's it like?

NIKOLIS
Oh, Mikonos is...like no other island in the world.

KORI
Are there lots of people there?

NIKOLIS
Oh, a lot of people. People of...all different kinds.

KORI
What do you mean?

NIKOLIS
People from...all over the world.

KORI
Like where?

NIKOLIS
Well...where else have you been?
(beat)
What other islands do you know?
(beat)
You've never been off this island?
(beat)
Yeah, you'd love Mikonos. Nowhere else like it in the world. You should learn to sail.

KORI
I know how to sail.

NIKOLIS
Oh. Really. Who taught you how to sail?

KORI
I taught myself.

NIKOLIS
Oh. Hm.
(beat)
You're the only two people on this entire island?
(beat)
Why?
(MORE)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
(beat)
Why are there no men here?

KORI
Most of them went off to the war. Everybody else died. We had a whole big family here. It was huge. That was before I was even born though.

NIKOLIS
No one's come back from the war?
(nope)
What happened to everyone else? *

KORI
They got old. Or they got sick.

NIKOLIS
Your mother? And your father?

KORI
They got sick. When I was four.
(beat)
I hate it here. We can't survive here.

NIKOLIS
But you have so much.

KORI
We have one goat. And when she's gone...
(beat)
There's a curse.

NIKOLIS
Huh?

KORI
I don't know what we did... or who it was... but there's a curse on this island. Yaya won't admit it. There's no poison plant. It's a curse.

(MELINA enters, with the dagger. She has changed, as well, into much nicer clothes.)

MELINA
(to Kori)
Go lock up the goat. Then up to bed.

KORI
I want to talk to our guest.

MELINA
He's not a guest.

KORI
Then what is he?

(They look at him.)

MELINA
(back to Kori)
Go lock up the goat.

(A tense beat.

KORI exits, outside.

Another beat.)

NIKOLIS
I don't want to cause any trouble between you and... your granddaughter.

MELINA
Then stay away from her.

NIKOLIS
I'm an honorable man.

MELINA
Right.

NIKOLIS
Thank you for the clothes. Again.

MELINA
Those rags you were wearing stank worse than the goat shed. I couldn't stand it.

NIKOLIS
Sorry. I was lost at sea.

MELINA
Were you now. Tangled with a sea monster, did ya.

NIKOLIS
Like I said, I don't know what exactly it was.

MELINA
But it took your boat to the bottom, is that what you said?

NIKOLIS
Something sank my boat, and it tried to take me with it.

MELINA
And you swam ashore here.

NIKOLIS
That's right. On the other side of the island.

MELINA
Right.

NIKOLIS
I just want to get back home.

MELINA
Tell me more about your family on Mikonos.

NIKOLIS
I'm the oldest of four. Brothers. And six sisters.

MELINA
A large family. But no wife?

NIKOLIS
Not yet.

MELINA
The oldest son of a large family on Mikonos, but no wife?

NIKOLIS
Just haven't met the right girl.

MELINA
I suppose that's up to your father.

NIKOLIS
I wouldn't say that. Dad and me are...very close.

MELINA
Is that so. What did you say his name was again?

NIKOLIS
Nikolis.

MELINA
That's right. Of course. You're the oldest.

NIKOLIS
Is there a boat on this island?
(beat)
That you know of?

MELINA
A boat.

NIKOLIS
If I'm gonna leave... You want me to swim?
(beat)
There must be a boat here.
(MORE)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
(beat)
What exactly happened here?

MELINA
The war happened. The plague. Everyone died. You tell me. What happened? What happened to the whole world? What's left out there? Nothing.

NIKOLIS
That's not true. The war's over. Finally. We can live again. Anything's possible.

MELINA
You're the son of a wealthy man. Anything's possible for you, maybe. For the rest of us. We're just trying to survive. Thanks to your war.

NIKOLIS
It wasn't my war.

MELINA
Oh, no? Who started it?

NIKOLIS
Not me.

MELINA
Oh, no? Who was it then? Did a bunch of women get together and start this war? No. They did not. It was a bunch of men. Men like your father. Men like you.

NIKOLIS
The whole thing started because of a woman. *

MELINA
That's what they always say. Well, it's over now, according to you. And we won. That's the good news. So, tell me, Mr. Andreus from Mikonos, what did we win?

NIKOLIS
We just...gotta go on. It's not as bad as you think.

MELINA
You don't know what I think.

NIKOLIS
I know what I think. I think...anything is possible.

(MELINA snickers.)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
Anything can happen. To anybody.

MELINA
I'm not surprised you see it that way.

NIKOLIS
You're wrong about the world out there, with all due respect. This is a great time to be alive.

MELINA
What happened to Ilios?

NIKOLIS
What happened? It's gone. There's nothing left of it.

MELINA
Of course not. Otherwise you and your friends wouldn't have left it behind.

(KORI re-enters from outside.

She looks at the other two.)

KORI
(to Melina)
She's in for the night.

MELINA
(to Kori)
Off you go.

(KORI and NIKOLIS regard each other.

MELINA crosses to KORI, and gives her a look.

KORI exits into the house.

MELINA turns to NIK.)

MELINA (cont'd)
You keep your hands off that girl. Or else.

NIKOLIS
You don't know me.

MELINA
I see right through you.

NIKOLIS
Then you can see I have nothing but respect for you and... your granddaughter.

MELINA
I mean what I say.

NIKOLIS
So do I. And now, if it's all right with you, I'd love to get some sleep.

(MELINA glares at him, dagger still in hand.

He goes to the door, and stops.)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
Thanks again...for your hospitality. *Kalinychta* [Good night.] *

(He exits, opposite KORI, elsewhere into the house.

Alone, with the dagger in hand, MELINA glares at the door where he exited.

Outside, the owl hoots.

MELINA wonders about the owl.

Blackout.)

3 IN THE NIGHT 3

(Sounds of creatures on the island, crickets, wild dogs fighting in the distance, the owl hoots again.

Then a different bird, a Nightingale calls. *

NIKO enters quietly, in the same * clothes he wore earlier, listens at the * other door, paces, anxiously, hears a * bird call, outside, exits following the * call. *

A moment later, KORI enters from the * house, in bed clothes of some sort. *

She hears the strange call of the Nightingale.)

KORI
(whispering)
Is that you?

(The bird calls.)

KORI (cont'd)
What do you want from me?

(Another call from the bird.

NIKOLIS enters from outside. *

Beat.)

NIKOLIS
Hello. I couldn't sleep. *
(beat)
What?

KORI
What are you doing out there?

NIKOLIS
I was out for a walk.
(beat)
You?

KORI
What?

NIKOLIS
What are you doing... here.

KORI
I heard something.

NIKOLIS
What?
(shakes her head, no)
Me?

(The Nightingale calls.

KORI looks.)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
That?
(beat)
You think that's... what?

(The bird calls again.)

KORI
I think it's a Nightingale.

(Again, the nightingale calls.)

NIKOLIS
Kori...

KORI
What?

NIKOLIS
Nothing. It's pretty.

KORI
What is?

NIKOLIS
The name. Your name.

KORI
It means girl.

NIKOLIS
Oh. I didn't know that. Mine means victory.

KORI
I know.

NIKOLIS
I was thinking about you.
(beat)
Were you thinking about me?

KORI
I heard something. I came down to see what it was.

NIKOLIS
Right. *

KORI
You have to leave tomorrow.
(beat)
Where you gonna go?

NIKOLIS
Well... I was also thinking about that.

KORI
And?

NIKOLIS
And... I don't know. I need to find a boat. You know where I can find one? There must be a boat somewhere on Kasos. Hm?

KORI
Maybe.

NIKOLIS
Maybe what?

KORI
Maybe there's a boat on the island somewhere.
(beat)
Tell me more about... Mikonos.

NIKOLIS
Oh. Well, Mikonos is... beautiful. The war hasn't touched Mikonos the way it has everywhere else. From what I've seen anyway.

KORI
What does it look like?

NIKOLIS
Hm?

KORI
Mikonos. What does it look like?

NIKOLIS
It's... really beautiful.

KORI
You said that.

NICKOLIS *
Yeah. Because it's really beautiful. *

KORI
What do they eat?

NIKOLIS
What do they eat? Well, we have beautiful olive orchards, on every hillside, every... as far as you can see, olives, and vineyards, we make fantastic wine on Mikonos, and sheep--herds and herds of... sheep. Goats, of course. Huge herds of goats. Fig trees--we love figs, we have apples, pomegranates! The size of...big... And pears, delicious pears. We're known for our pears. I could go on and on, many foods, we have foods from everywhere. Well, not everywhere, but... wonderful food.

KORI
And you live with your family?

NIKOLIS
Mm-hm. I miss them. I miss them very much. My mother. You'd love her. Everyone loves my mother.

KORI
You have brothers?

NIKOLIS
I do indeed, six of them--four of them. Six sisters. You're the one with six brothers.
(a little laugh)

KORI
Who's the oldest brother?

NIKOLIS
Me.

KORI
Hm. Lucky you.
(beat)
Who rules Mikonos?

NIKOLIS
Who rules? Well... the king rules Mikonos.

KORI
You have a king?

NIKOLIS
Of course, we have a king. A mighty king. The mighty... Zyn...jan...thro...pos.

KORI
Who?

NIKOLIS
Zynjanthropos.

KORI
Hm.

NIKOLIS
You've never heard of him?

KORI
I don't think so. Is he a good king?

NIKOLIS
A very good king. They say his ancestor--his father's father's father from... many generations back... was a great hero. A god of some sort. Or the child of a god. I'm not sure of the details on all that. Yes, a very good king. Loved and respected by everyone. Well almost everyone, there are criminals and troublemakers there, just like anywhere else, and no doubt they think badly of the king, but who listens to criminals and troublemakers? Only criminals and troublemakers--

KORI
And who exactly is your father?

NIKOLIS
My father's a great man. And very loyal to the king.

KORI
Zyn...

NIKOLIS
Zynjanthropos. Yes. Very loyal. And very well loved by the king. Loved by all. My father is. And we... are very close.
(like crossed fingers)

KORI
Hm. So, one day you'll be... *

NIKOLIS
Mm-hm.

KORI
What was the war like?

NIKOLIS
The war?
(shakes his head, no)
Not what I thought it was gonna be.

KORI
What did you think it was gonna be?

NIKOLIS
I was a lot younger when I went.

KORI
You were a captain?

(He nods, yes.)

NIKOLIS
When it ended.
(beat)
I lost a lot of friends there. I just want to forget about all that now.

(She kisses him.

Beat.)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
What are you doing?

MELINA
I kissed you. Couldn't you tell?

NIKOLIS
Yes. I could tell. If your grandmother...

KORI
What about her?

(He moves away.)

KORI (cont'd)
Don't you want to kiss me?

NIKOLIS
Your grandmother doesn't trust me.

KORI
My grandmother doesn't trust anyone. I'm leaving Kasos.

NIKOLIS
Really. And where are you gonna go?

KORI
I want to see Mikonos.

NIKOLIS
Really. And how are you planning to get there?

KORI
I have a boat.

NIKOLIS
You have a boat.
(beat)
What kind of boat?

KORI
A caique [ki-a-key].

NIKOLIS
Is it rigged for sail?

KORI
Fully. I've been out past the bay in it. Been all around the island... hundreds of times.

NIKOLIS
But not out to sea? *

KORI *
Well... *

NIKOLIS *
What other islands have you sailed it to?
(beat)
Nowhere.
(beat)
How big is it?

KORI
From me, to you...about.
(about 15 feet)

NIKOLIS
How many sails?

KORI
One. Lateen.

(beat)

NIKOLIS
Mikonos is a long, long way.

KORI
How far?

NIKOLIS
At least...a week, maybe ten days. In a caique with one lateen. With summer storms...

KORI
So?

NIKOLIS
What about your grandmother?

KORI
You let me worry about that.
(pointing)
You see those rocks out there?

NIKOLIS
Where?

KORI
Past the orchard. Right under the moon there. Sticking up like three big heads. You see 'em? *

NIKOLIS
Yeah, I see 'em.

KORI
Just past those rocks, there's a cliff. Down at the bottom of that cliff, there's a beach. In the cove there.

NIKOLIS
Yeah?

KORI
Meet me on the beach there. Tomorrow at noon. The tide'll be goin' out.

(They almost kiss.

But MELINA enters from the house.

KORI and NIK separate.

All stop.

MELINA still has the dagger in hand.

Beat.)

MELINA
(to Kori)
Get upstairs. And lock the door to your room.

NIKOLIS
I can explain this--

MELINA
Shut up.

KORI
Yaya--

MELINA
I said get upstairs!
(beat)
(MORE)

MELINA (cont'd)
You cannot trust this man. Whatever he's been telling you, you cannot trust him. Now go!

(She doesn't.)

MELINA (cont'd)
Don't be an idiot.
(beat)
What's he been saying to you?

NIKOLIS
M'am, there's no need to--

MELINA
I said shut up you!

KORI
Yaya, he didn't say anything. You can put the knife away.

MELINA
Don't tell me what I can and can't do--

KORI
Why not, you do that to me all day long!

(Beat.)

MELINA
You don't understand. You've got no experience at this. I know the type. He'll say anything to get what he wants, and I know what he wants. Now get upstairs, and lock the door to your room!

KORI
No!

(A tense beat.)

NIKOLIS
Please.
(beat)
I'll go. I don't want to cause any trouble. I can see I've over-stayed my welcome. I'm sorry. I didn't mean any disrespect. I can see... the only thing for me to do is...just...say...thank you. Thank you for your kindness. I wish you all the best in the world. Both of you. You're really lucky to have this place.
(starts out, but stops)
Oh. Your clothes... let me just, um--

MELINA
Keep the clothes. I got no use for 'em.

NIKOLIS
Well. Thank you. Again. May the gods protect you, and keep you well.

(He's about to leave.)

KORI
Good bye.

(He stops.

Turns back and looks at KORI.

Beat.

He goes, off outside into the night.

MELINA crosses to the door, and watches him go.

Beat.

KORI heads into the house.)

MELINA
Wait!

(She stops.

MELINA makes sure Nik is gone, then turns to her granddaughter.)

MELINA (cont'd)
He'll be back. You know that, don't you?
(beat)
Don't tell me you think you're in love with him.

KORI
No, Yaya, I'm not in love with him. What are you so afraid of?

MELINA
You think I'm afraid? I can see through him. I see with clear eyes. You are blinded by youth, and desire, and stupidity!

KORI
I'm not stupid!

MELINA
Yes, you are, you're stupid if you think you can trust that man!

KORI
I don't want to die here!

(Beat.)

MELINA
So what are you gonna do?
(beat)
What are you going to do?

KORI
I'm not like you.

MELINA
No. You're young.

KORI
No. I'm not. I'm dying here. There's more to the world than this tiny little island. There's wonders out there. And there's beauty. There's adventure. And fun.

MELINA
Fun?

KORI
Yes, fun!

MELINA
We're trying to keep from starving to death!

KORI
I'm not starving. We're not starving. We have lots of food!

MELINA
Because we grow it, because we would starve to death if we didn't--

KORI
I have to get away from here!

(beat)

MELINA
You wanna run away with him? Him? On what--a flying horse?
(beat)
That little skiff you fish in?
(beat)
You think that'll get you... where? To Mikonos?
(she laughs)
You think you'll cross the open sea in that little thing?
(more laughter, till it passes)
You'll never make it. And you know it.

KORI
I'm not running away with anyone.

(beat)

MELINA
You think it's you he's after.
(beat)
He's not after you. It's this place he wants. And he won't stop till he gets it. He's using you. And you don't even see it. He'll sing whatever song he needs to sing to you. To breathe... is to lie... for a man like that. A man like any other. It's what they do. He's just like your father.

(Beat.)

KORI
How exactly did my father die?

MELINA
You know well enough how he died.

KORI
You say the plague took him.
(beat)
Him and my mother both.
(beat)
That's what you say.
(beat)
But I don't believe it.

MELINA
Don't push this.

KORI
How did they die?
(beat)
Tell me.
(beat)
Tell me!

(KORI sits beside her grandmother, and looks her in the eyes.)

KORI (cont'd)
Tell me.

(Beat.)

MELINA
Your father was from Karpathos. He had strange ideas. But he was good looking. So your mother thought. He could be charming. There was just something about him that Sophia couldn't resist. I never liked him.
(MORE)

MELINA (cont'd)
I could see through him from the start. I knew what he was after from the first moment I met him. Sophia knew it, too. Eventually. But it was way too late by then. She sent him away. But he wouldn't go. He lost his head. It was a madness. Jealousy. Out of his head. I found her. In their bed. He claimed she died in the night. Weeping and moaning, pulling at his hair, cursing the gods, she was struck dead, he told me. Struck dead by some cruel god that seized hold of her heart and stopped it. For spite. For enmity. But there were no tears in his eyes. He was lying. I knew it then, and I know it now, he was lying. The imprint of his fingers was plain as day on her neck. In his madness, he strangled the life out of her.

KORI
How can you be sure of that?

(MELINA just looks at her.)

KORI (cont'd)
What... did you do? What happened to him?

(Just an icy look.)

MELINA
It's what they do.
(gestures at Niko))
He'll be back. And it won't end. Till we're rid of him. One way or another.

(KORI shakes her head, no.)

MELINA (cont'd)
This... is what we have. This... is the world. We have to keep it.

KORI
We can't go on like this. We'll die here.

MELINA
We can. And we will.

(MELINA opens her arms to embrace KORI-- with the dagger still in one hand.

Beat.

KORI runs off into the house.

Alone, MELINA looks at the dagger.

The owl hoots.

Blackout.)

4 HIGH NOON 4

(The next day. Sunlight beams into the room.

MELINA enters from the house, dagger in hand, patrolling for any sign of Nik.

She looks out the windows, scanning the grounds.

She exits, back into the house, continuing on her rounds.

From elsewhere in the house, KORI enters, sneaking in, dressed to travel, with a small satchel of belongings.

She stops, looks out the window, thinks over a big decision, but then realizes she's forgotten something.

She opens her satchel, looking for something.

MELINA returns, unexpectedly.

Both stop.

Beat.

MELINA still has the deadly-looking dagger in one hand.)

MELINA
Where do you think you're going?

(beat)

KORI
I just... have something... I need to do.

MELINA
No, you don't.

KORI
You can't stop me from leaving.

MELINA
No. I can't. I just wish you understood... how wrong you are about him--

KORI
<u>You</u> have to understand.

(beat)

MELINA

Don’t go.

(beat)

Please.

(KORI takes her satchel, goes to the glass doors, takes a last look back, and goes, off outside.

MELINA watches her go.

Then alone, she sits.

Devastated.

The owl hoots.

MELINA (cont’d)

(to a goddess)

Why?

(beat)

What?!

(beat)

Why did you do this to me?

(beat)

Answer me!

(beat)

Are you even there?

(beat)

Were you ever there?

(MELINA cries.

NIK approaches outside.

Stops at the glass doors.

With a bouquet of wild flowers in hand.

MELINA discovers him standing there, startling her; she jumps up and holds him at bay with the dagger.)

NIKOLIS

(outside)

No. It’s me. I’m here... out of respect. I just want to talk to you.

(holds out the flowers)

Here. I brought you... some flowers. For you. As a sign of... respect.

MELINA
What do you mean, you wanna talk?

NIKOLIS
Is Kori here?

MELINA
That's none of your business.

NIKOLIS
All right. That doesn't really matter. It's you, I want to talk to.

MELINA
Is that right. And what do you want to talk to me about?

NIKOLIS
I've come to ask for your granddaughter's hand in marriage.

MELINA
What makes you think I have her hand to give you?

NIKOLIS
I think we both know why I think that.

MELINA
Are you soft in the head?

NIKOLIS
What?
(beat)
Can I come in, please?

(beat)

MELINA
Be my guest.

(MELINA re-positions herself on one side of the room, allowing him in.

He enters.)

MELINA (cont'd)
(directing him with the dagger)
Over there.

(He moves to the other side of the room.

She keeps the dagger ready.)

NIKOLIS
Thank you. As I said...
(about the flowers)
These are for you.

MELINA
Just set 'em down there.

(He lays the flowers on a bench.)

NIKOLIS
First off, let me say again, I come with deepest respect for you and your granddaughter. I'm an honorable man. My intentions are... honorable.

MELINA
Good for you.

NIKOLIS
I want us to be married.

MELINA
You're too old for me.

NIKOLIS
Me and Kori.

MELINA
Oh. Well, good luck with that.

NIKOLIS
I want you to reason with her.

(MELINA laughs.)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
She listens to you. As well, she should. You're wise. I know this. It's your wisdom, and your strength, that have made this place so... bountiful. My family... and your family... should join houses. Kori. And me. With your blessing.

MELINA
And what would be yours?

NIKOLIS
Everything would be...ours.

MELINA
Ours.

NIKOLIS
I'm a good man. I will honor your granddaughter. And I will honor you.
(MORE)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
If it pleases the gods, we'll have children together. I'll dedicate myself, with every fiber of my body, to providing for her, and for you, to protecting her, and you, to my last dying breath. I have a lot to offer you. My father's a trusted advisor to the king of Mikonos. I'm his oldest, and most favored son. My father loves me. And one day, he'll entrust me with the leadership of our family. Can you really afford to ignore me?

MELINA
I'll think it over.

NIKOLIS
Can I speak with her? The three of us?

MELINA
Not at the moment. No.

NIKOLIS
Why not?

MELINA
Because she's busy right now.

NIKOLIS
Did she already leave?
(looks out the window)

MELINA
I'll talk to her.

NIKOLIS
(back to Melina)
You will?

MELINA
Maybe I was wrong about you.

NIKOLIS
I'm an honorable man.

(Beat.)

MELINA
I will tell you something. In my heart, I want nothing more than for Kori to find someone... worthy of her. Someone right for her. For our home here. This is all we have.

NIKOLIS
You have an unlimited wealth here. This island could be thriving with people again one day. The possibilities are endless here. You have water. You have life. You have the favor of the gods. And you have Kori.

MELINA
I will do what I can. But Kori is a girl with a mind of her own. She's always been that way. Her first spoken word was "no." A mind of her own.

NIKOLIS
Talk to her. Reason with her. You know what I'm saying makes sense. It's the only logical choice, given... everything. It just...makes sense. Don't you think?

MELINA
I'll talk to her.

NIKOLIS
You will?

MELINA
I give you my word.

(MELINA offers her hand to NIK, to seal a kind of deal between them--with the dagger still in her other hand.

If she were going to try and stab him, this would be the perfect opportunity.

If he takes her hand.

He grips her forearm, and their eyes lock.)

MELINA (cont'd)
I can't speak for her, but I will tell you this, if she decides to accept your proposal, I will personally perform the ceremony.

(She releases his forearm.)

NIKOLIS
Ceremony?

MELINA
The wedding.

NIKOLIS
Ah. Yes. The wedding.

MELINA
Vows. And an offering.

NIKOLIS
An offering?
(beat)
I don't have a proper gift.
(MORE)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
But I promise, when I finally see my father again, I will bring you such gifts as you've never imagined. If I had the world to give to Kori, it would not be enough, but I promise you, one day I will shower her with a treasure fit for a princess of Kasos. And her grandmother, the queen.

(KORI enters from outside, without her satchel.

She stops when she sees NIK.

Beat.)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
Hello.

KORI
Where've you been?

NIKOLIS
Well...
(looks to Melina)

(MELINA crosses to KORI, and hugs her.)

MELINA
Good morning, darling.

KORI
What's going on here?

MELINA
Mr. Andreus was just telling me all about Mikonos.
(scoops up the flowers)
He brought me these flowers. Aren't they beautiful?
(she arranges the flowers in the water pitcher as she continues)
Did you know his father is friends with the king of Mikonos? What's his name again?

NIKOLIS
Uh...Zynjanthropos. *

MELINA
(to Kori)
Isn't that interesting? Come in, come in, sit down. Let's talk. The three of us, shall we?
(to Kori)
Sit here, darling.

(KORI sits, uncertainly.)

MELINA (cont'd)
And you there, Mr. Andreus.

NIKOLIS
Thank you, Missus--?

MELINA
Petrakis is my family name.

NIKOLIS
Thank you, Mrs. Petrakis.

(He sits, opposite KORI.)

KORI
What's going on here?

(NIKOLIS hesitates.)

KORI (cont'd)
(to Nik)
Where were you?

MELINA
Mr. Andreus has a proposal for you.

KORI
What?

MELINA
I'll let you speak for yourself, Mr. Andreus.

(There's no easy way to say this.)

NIKOLIS
Well...
(he stands)
I've...
(on one knee)
I've come to ask for your hand in marriage.

(beat)

KORI
What?

NIKOLIS
I've come to--

KORI
Marriage? What are you talking about?

NIKOLIS
Well, like I told your grandmother--

KORI
What have you two been talking about?
(to Nik)
Where were you? I was waiting.

NIKOLIS
I don't think it's right we leave Mrs.--your grandmother--alone... like that.

KORI
We're leaving. We're going to Mikonos.

MELINA
Please, Kori, just... hear him out.

KORI
You said you would take me to Mikonos.

NIKOLIS
And I will. But first, I want to pay your grandmother, and you, the respect you deserve. I want us to... join hands... in marriage. To bind our two families together. As one.

MELINA
And then what?

NIKOLIS
And then... I want us to have children together.

(beat)

MELINA
(taking her hand)
It's a lot to take in, I know.

KORI
(pulling her hand away)
What's the matter with you?

MELINA
Think it over, darling. Good things come in unexpected ways.

KORI
(to Melina)
You think that'll keep me here?

NIKOLIS
I want us to be a family.

KORI
I don't know what you two have cooked up between you, but I'm leaving this island. I'm not staying here another day. I want to get out and see something other than this barren rock pile before I die. I want to see the world.
(MORE)

KORI (cont'd)
I want to know what's out there. I want to have fun. I want to fall in love. I want to have adventures. I want to fight sea monsters! I'm leaving.
(to Nik)
Are you coming? Or am I going alone? Either way. I'm leaving.

NIKOLIS
You'll never make it in that fishing skiff. No way. Please. Don't do that. You'll never survive in that thing. You'll drown. Please.

KORI
You said...
(beat)
Were you lying to me?

(beat)

MELINA
If I may... Mr. Andreus, perhaps you'd let me talk with my granddaughter alone for a bit.

NIKOLIS
Hm?

MELINA
(ushering him out the door)
I think that would be best at the moment.

NIKOLIS
Oh. / Of course.

MELINA
This is all a bit of a shock to us. But I'm sure we can come to some kind of agreement if we give it just a little bit of time.

NIKOLIS
You do? / Really?

MELINA
Why don't you wait right there in the olive grove... there, do you see it out there?

NIKOLIS
Where? There?

MELINA
Right there, in the shade, yes, and we'll come and get you in a little bit--

NIKOLIS
Wait there, and you'll come get me?

MELINA
Is that all right with you, / thank you so much, Mr. Andreus, there you go.

NIKOLIS
(as he goes)
All right. All right. I'll be waiting.

(He is gone.

MELINA returns and faces KORI.

Beat.)

KORI
What the hell is going on with you?

(MELINA checks to make sure NIK is out of earshot.)

MELINA
(back to Kori)
What did I tell you?

KORI
Huh?

MELINA
I told you what he was after... and you wouldn't listen to me.

KORI
You don't own me.

MELINA
Shut up, you little idiot, can't you see what he's trying to do? You think he wants to run away with you? It's this house he wants. He wants the land it's on. He wants Kasos--for himself! You're just part of the package. You're like that goat out there. Breeding stock. I told you that. I told you more than once, but you don't listen. Why don't you listen? You think you're gonna sail across the ocean in a canoe? We're stuck here. This is all we got. This is all there is. And he wants it. Get it through your thick little head, if he stays, he takes over. If he leaves, he comes back and takes over. That's what this is all about. Now wake up, and let's do something about it.

KORI
You want me to marry him? How could you?

MELINA
No, you idiot.

KORI
Quit calling me that!

MELINA
Quit being stupid!

KORI
I hate you.

MELINA
So what?
(beat)
There's only one way out of this.

KORI
Which is what?

MELINA
I have a powder. Made from the hemlock plant.

KORI
The what?

MELINA
I brought it with me from Delos. When they sent me to marry your grandfather. My mother gave it to me. In case things... didn't work out. My mother was a funny woman. She knew all about the plants. She made powders, with roots and... all sorts of things. Medicines. And... so forth.

KORI
And you still have this... powder?
(she nods)
What does it do?
(Melina looks at her)
Poison?
(still the look)
Have you ever used it?
(Melina looks away)
My father?

MELINA
What else could I do?

KORI
You...

(beat)

MELINA
Accept his proposal of marriage. And I'll prepare a drink of our wine. To celebrate, and honor the sacred event. But I'll need some time to prepare it. I'll leave the two of you alone. I'll say I'm preparing a meal.
(MORE)

MELINA (cont'd)
And I'll leave you two alone... to speak... more candidly with each other, more freely. To get to know one another a bit more deeply. Open up to him. Let him think he's won you over. Make him think you're falling in love with him--

KORI
He'll never believe it--

MELINA
Of course, he'll believe it, if you <u>make</u> him believe it. It's a simple look in the eye. Just... believe it yourself, and he'll see it in your eyes. Trust me. It's as easy as singing. I'll look in on you. And you can tell me the good news. To celebrate, I'll bring in a drink. Just remember, drink only from the cup I give you.

KORI
He'll know.

MELINA
Him? I don't think so. Not if you convince him you'll be a good wife. And a mother to his children. Not if he believes you've fallen in love with him.

(KORI shakes her head, no.)

MELINA (cont'd)
It's that, or submit to him. That's what he wants. Sooner or later... that's what he'll demand.

KORI
No. I'm leaving. I don't want any part of this. You poisoned my father?

MELINA
He strangled your mother to death. Murdered her. Upstairs in the old bedroom. I found her. The mark of his fingers bright red on her throat. I repaid him in kind. I know his type.
(referring to Nik)
This one's no different. Believe me.

KORI
No. I don't care what happens to me out there. If the sea takes me... I don't care. I'm not staying here.

(Beat.)

MELINA
All right. Then... goodbye. I love you. I'll always love you. No matter what... I love you.

(MELINA sets the dagger on a bench.)

MELINA (cont'd)
Here. Take it. If you're gonna go, take that with you. You're gonna need it.

KORI
No. You keep it. You need it.

MELINA
You more than me.
(beat)
Well?

(Beat.

KORI heads out.

But stops.

She can't leave her grandmother like this.

She let's out an exasperated cry.)

KORI
God damnit!

(She turns back to Melina.)

KORI (cont'd)
All right. What do you want me to do?

MELINA
Oh, that's my girl. That's my Kori. I knew you'd listen to reason.

KORI
What are we doing!

MELINA
Right.

(MELINA thinks.)

MELINA (cont'd)
First...
(moves the dagger to the mantle)
We'll leave this here.
(pointing)
Now. You sit there. And just... look... beautiful.

KORI
What are you gonna do?

MELINA
I'm gonna go get him. And I'm gonna bring him back in here. And you... are going to let him court you. And when the time is right, you're going to accept his proposal. And then I will suggest a celebration. Can you do that?

(Beat.)

KORI
Go.

(MELINA touches KORI.)

MELINA
You can do this. Remember: drink only from the cup I give you.

(MELINA exits to go get NIK.

Alone, KORI thinks it over.

She looks at the dagger on the mantle.

Picks it up.

Outside, the owl hoots.

KORI gets an idea.

She sets the dagger back on the mantle, and runs off into the house.

We hear MELINA and NIK approach outside.)

MELINA (cont'd)
(off)
Yes, I'm hoping, one day--one day soon--we'll repair all of that.
(entering)
It used to be--
(she sees Kori is gone)

(NIK follows her in, and stops.

Beat.)

NIKOLIS
Where is she?

MELINA
Well...
(with a smile)
I'll just go see.

(She sees the dagger.

She picks it up, turns to Nik, another smile.)

MELINA (cont'd)
She's probably in the kitchen. She loves to cook. And, if I do say so myself, she was trained by the best.

(She laughs and exits.

Alone, NIK waits.

Paces, nervously.)

NIKOLIS
(to himself)
Kori... I know we've only just met... but I... feel something... for you... your eyes... like gilded orbs... No, don't say that... I sound like an idiot. Just... say what you...

(Outside, the owl hoots.)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
Hello? Are you there? What should I say? Tell me...what words...

(MELINA returns, concealing her unease, still with the dagger.

She keeps her distance, guardedly.)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
Everything all right?

MELINA
Yes. Wonderful. As I suspected, she's in the kitchen. Making something wonderful. For us all to... eat. Together.

NIKOLIS
Has she changed her mind?

MELINA
Hm?

NIKOLIS
She's changed her mind. Hasn't she?

MELINA
No. Why would she change her mind?

NIKOLIS
I shouldn't have waited.

MELINA
Waited for what?

NIKOLIS
Waited to tell her...what I really thought. *

MELINA
What you really thought... about what?

NIKOLIS
About why I'm here.

MELINA
And... why is that?

(KORI enters--not from the kitchen.

She has changed, and beautified herself a bit, another change to her hair--that is definitely make-up she's wearing now.

Beat.)

MELINA (cont'd)
Darling. I thought you were in the kitchen.

NIKOLIS
Hello, Kori.

KORI
Hi.
(beat)
Put the dagger away, Yaya.

(MELINA places the dagger back on the mantle.)

KORI (cont'd)
Leave us alone.

MELINA
Of course. I'll make us something special. For dinner.

(MELINA looks at the dagger on the mantle, and exits to the kitchen.

Beat.)

NIKOLIS
So. Have you reached a decision?

KORI
About what?

NIKOLIS
My proposal of marriage?

KORI
Oh. Yes.

NIKOLIS
Yes?

KORI
No. I mean, yes, I've reached a decision.

NIKOLIS
Oh. And?

KORI
I've decided I'll consider it.

NIKOLIS
You'll consider it.

KORI
Mm-hm.

(She picks up the dagger.)

KORI (cont'd)
You know where this came from? This was my grandfather's. He gave it to Yaya when he left for the war. When she was pregnant with my mother. He gave it to her so she could protect herself, while he was away. That was like... forty years ago. Papu never came back. There was a story he died bravely, fighting...sombody or other. *

NIKOLIS
Look, I know you barely know me, but I swear to you, I'll be a good husband to you. This place... this is a palace... fit for the gods. Was it your grandfather who built this old house? Who built this place?

KORI
I don't really know.

NIKOLIS
I'll be true to you, Kori. I swear before all the gods, I'll never let anyone harm you. You or your grandmother. We'll be a family. Here. And we'll have children. And it will be ours.

KORI
You promised you would go with me to Mikonos.

NIKOLIS
I did. And we will. One day. When we can get there safely.

KORI
Why didn't you meet me like you said you would?

(Beat.)

NIKOLIS
I haven't been... entirely truthful with you.

KORI
What do you mean?

NIKOLIS
I don't actually know... how to sail.

KORI
You don't know how to sail. Then how did you get here? What about your... Egyptian--what was it?

NIKOLIS
Yeah. That wasn't exactly... true.

KORI
How did you get here?

NIKOLIS
Oh, I swam ashore. Like I said. But my boat wasn't attacked.

KORI
And the sea monster?

NIKOLIS
Yeah, that wasn't exactly... true. Either.

KORI
What are you doing here?

NIKOLIS
I jumped ship.

KORI
What?

NIKOLIS
We were headed for Ilios.

KORI
You were on your way there?

NIKOLIS
Mm-hm.

KORI
Why?

NIKOLIS
They sent me there.

KORI
Who sent you there?

NIKOLIS
Um, Leontes of Argolis.

KORI
Who?

NIKOLIS
Leontes. The tyrant of Argolis?

KORI
I thought you were from Mikonos.

NIKOLIS
Yeah. That's not true either.

KORI
So, you can't steer by the stars?... Who are you? *

NIKOLIS
Well, my name is Nikolis. That's true. But I'm not from Mikonos. And my father... The truth is, I don't exactly know who my father is. Was. Whatever. Yeah. I made all that up.

KORI
You made it up.

NIKOLIS
The truth is... I been lying to you since the first moment we met. But I can't lie to you anymore. Cause you're a good person. I really think there's something really special about you. In Argos, they gave me a choice: I could go to the copper mines, or I could go to the war. Well, I've worked in the copper mines, and I didn't want to do that again. So I joined the army. A whole ship full of us. And we passed by this island, and I was up on deck, in the middle of the night, and I could see this island in the moonlight, and I heard a voice. I swear to God, I heard a voice. It was a god. A god watches over me. And I heard his voice. Or her voice. I'm not exactly sure which god it is, but it was the voice of a god, I'm sure of that now, and it said: Here. Swim for it. I didn't want to die in the war. They'll probably hang me if they ever find me. But that voice led me here. To you. And now, all I know is, whatever happens, I swear to you, I'll always be true to you. There. That's the truth. I know you'll never marry me now. But at least I've told the truth.

KORI
And the war?

NIKOLIS
What about it?

KORI
Is it over, or not?

NIKOLIS
I have no idea. I'm not sure anyone does. But there's no war here. You can't leave your grandmother here. Alone? Can you? She'll die alone. And then what? All this... and no one? Nothing? We can't let that happen. Can we? We can make a new start here. The three of us.

KORI
And if I say no?

NIKOLIS
Then I'll go. I swear. To you. Before all the gods. Say the word... and I'll go. I'll walk out that door, and I'll never return.

KORI
Where will you go?

NIKOLIS
I don't exactly know. But I swear... that's the last you'll ever see of me.

(A knock at the door.

Beat.

MELINA peaks her head in.)

MELINA
Well?

(Beat.

MELINA enters.)

MELINA (cont'd)
How are we?

(KORI returns the dagger to the mantle, and turns to the others.)

KORI
I have decided to accept this proposal of marriage.

NIKOLIS
Thank you, God, who ever you are.

MELINA
Oh, happy day.

(NIK approaches KORI.

Slowly.

They join hands.)

MELINA (cont'd)
We should celebrate.
(A look shared with Kori.)
I've got just the thing.

(MELINA exits.)

KORI
I need to sit.

NIKOLIS
Of course, are you all right?

(MELINA returns with three goblets on a tray.

She sets the tray down on a bench.)

KORI
(sitting)
I'm fine. Just a little weak in the knees, I guess.

NIKOLIS
Darling.

KORI
Something to drink, Yaya?

MELINA
Yes.

(MELINA gives one of the goblets to KORI.)

MELINA (cont'd)
Here you are. This is for you.

(She gives NIK one of the other goblets.)

MELINA (cont'd)
And this is for you... son-in-law.

(NIK almost drinks.)

MELINA (cont'd)
(stopping him)
Aht-aht-ah!

KORI
What, Yaya?

MELINA
Not just yet. I'd like to make an offering.

NIKOLIS
Oh. Sorry. I'm just thirsty.

MELINA
Of course.

(MELINA takes the third goblet, and raises it to her goddess.)

MELINA (cont'd)
To she who watches over Kasos, our goddess of the morning light. To her, we offer this sacred libation, that she might continue to shower us with peace, and bounty, and new life. Let us drink.

(They almost drink.)

NIKOLIS
Wait.

(All stop.)

MELINA AND KORI
(together)
What?

NIKOLIS
I want to say a few words.

MELINA
Of course.

NIKOLIS
I don't know what it is I've done... to deserve this kindness, this good fortune that the gods have bestowed on me. But I declare before all of them... may they strike me dead, may they curse my children, may they torment me through all eternity, if ever I should waiver or fail in my vow to you, Kori, and to you... Mother, to protect you, and this island that is our home, always, and forever.
(to Melina)
To the queen of Kasos!

(MELINA smiles.

And drinks.

NIK raises the goblet to his lips.

But KORI stops him.)

KORI
No!

(All stop.)

NIKOLIS
Did you want to say something, Kori?
(beat)
No?

(KORI sets her goblet down.)

KORI
I can't do this.

NIKOLIS
You can't do what?

(NIK looks at his goblet.

MELINA sets her goblet down.

NIK sets his goblet down.

MELINA dashes for the dagger.)

KORI
No!

(KORI tries to intervene, but NIK pushes her out of the way, and grabs MELINA by the wrist as she grabs the dagger on the mantle.

They struggle, but NIKOLIS wrestles the dagger away from MELINA, and turns on the both of them with the deadly-looking weapon in hand.)

KORI (cont'd)
Don't. Please. Stop.

NIKOLIS
(to Melina)
You were gonna poison me.

KORI
No.

(NIK picks up his goblet, and offers it to MELINA.)

NIKOLIS
Drink it. Go ahead. Drink it!

(She does not.)

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
Damn you. You wretched old witch.

KORI
Stop it!

NIKOLIS
(to Kori)
And you knew. How could you do that to me?

MELINA
Cause she knows you for who you are!

NIKOLIS
Shut up!

MELINA
See him for what he is!

NIKOLIS
You're wrong about me!

KORI
Put the knife away!

MELINA
A thief in the night!

NIKOLIS
I will kill you.

MELINA
A shadow of a man.

(NIK moves toward MELINA.

But KORI steps between them.

He stops.)

NIKOLIS
(to Kori)
Move.

KORI
Please. I'm begging you. Put the knife away.

NIKOLIS
(to Melina)
You tried to kill me.
(to Kori)
And you knew. You were in on it. Why?

(A long beat.

Finally, NIK crosses to the mantle, and returns the dagger to its place there.

Then he turns to the other two.

NIKOLIS (cont'd)
Well...now what?

(An even longer beat.

A bird calls.

They all hear it.

Blackout.)

THE END *