

# *The Squirrels*

A Parody of “The Frogs” by Aristophanes

Script: Rianna Ouellette

Songs: Catherine Barrett, Claire Collins, Lila Garrott, Rianna Ouellette, Zara Yost

## CAST:

Dionysus – Elizabeth Hanson '06

Xanthias, his slave - Rianna Ouellette '04

Herakles - Jennifer Gamble '05

Maid 1 – Aaron Kook

Maid 2 – Prof. Hamilton

Aiakos, Hades' janitor - Catherine Barrett '05

Hades – Prof. Edmonds

Euripides - Claire Collins '06

Aeschylus - Catriona McDonald '04

Chorus - Rianna Ouellette '04, Catriona McDonald '04, Catherine Barrett '05, Claire Collins '06, Jennifer Gamble '05, Zara Yost '06, Lila Garrott '04, Christiane Merritt '06, Sarah Hartman '06, Joanna Karpinski '05

Technical Goddess: Ariel Singer '06

## PROLOGUE: *[Enter Chorus]*

Remember the Scythian, he lives not in a house! Haha, haha, haha!  
*(deadpan)*

*[ Dionysus dressed in a lion skin and carrying a club, and Xanthias, carrying a heavy book bag.]:*

*(To the tune of “Modern Major General”)*

Dionysus:

I am the very model of a Pan-Hellenic deity,

a god of theatre, tragedy, wine, revelry and gaiety;

I know the kings of Sparta and I quote the fights historical  
from Marathon to Salamis, in order categorical--

I'm very well acquainted too with tearing goats to tiny shreds,  
with turning boats to ivy, and with giving mothers their sons'  
heads;

about the art of getting drunk I'm teeming with a lot o'news *(pause)*  
and many cheerful facts about the better kinds of Grecian booze!

Chorus and Xanthias:

And many cheerful facts about the better kinds of Grecian booze,  
and many cheerful facts about the better kinds of Grecian booze,  
and many cheerful facts about the better kinds of Grecian, Grecian  
booze!

Dion:

I know our mythic history, Achilles to Odysseus,  
I love anachronisms [Xan, *loudly*: Huh?], I'm a friend of old  
Tiresias,

I quote in elegiacs all the crimes of Heliogabalus  
[Xan: Anachronisms, right, got it.]

And in epic hexameter the woes of bitter Daedalus--  
I'm always kind to suppliants, or anyone who grabs my knees  
*[here Dion.should wink or something, and Xan. possibly look shocked],*

I know the croaking chorus from the Frogs of Aristophanes  
And I can hum a fugue of which I've heard the music's din afore  
[Xan:Brek-kek-kek-kek-- Dion: Shut up, I'm singing!]

Chorus/Xan (*loudly, overpowering Dion.*):

I know the croaking chorus from the Frogs of Aristophanes.

I know the croaking chorus from the Frogs of Aristophanes.

I know the croaking chorus from the Frogs of Aristopha-stophanes.

Dion:

Then I can write a washing bill in Babylonian cuneiform,  
and tell you every detail of King Darius's uniform;  
in short, though I'm distractable by any kind of gaiety  
I am the very model of a Pan-Hellenic deity!

Chorus/Xan:

In short, though he's distractable by any kind of gaiety, he is  
the very model of a Pan-Hellenic deity!

Dion:

In fact, when I know what is meant by 'dactylic' or 'epigraph'--  
when I can tell at sight a line of Homer from an epitaph--  
when such affairs as boxing and pankration I'm wary at--  
and when I've got a servant who won't drop his load but carry it—

[Xan: Hey! \*glowers\*]

when I know what Herodotus was saying in his Histories,  
when I know more of ritual than the donkey at the Mysteries,  
and when I know a thyrsis isn't made from sacred olive trees--  
why, then I don't think I will need to go and pester Heracles!

Chorus./Xan.:

We really think that he will need to go and pester Heracles!  
We really think that he will need to go and pester Heracles!  
We really think that he will need to go and pester Hera-Heracles!  
In short, though he's distractable by any kind of gaiety, he is the  
very  
model of a Pan-hellenic deity.

[Exit Chorus. Enter Heracles is on center stage, standing straight  
like a pillar.]

Xan: Oh my back! What do you have in this bag, Hansen and  
Quinn?

Dion: You know I'm working on my thesis concerning the  
implications of the word 'kai' in Euripides' tragedies. I need  
to ask him a few questions.

Xan: Euripides is dead. He is deceased. He is no more. He is an  
ex-poet. How are we going to ask him? Go to Hades?

Dion: (*seeing Herakles and pointing*) Exactly! And we're going  
to ask the man who has been there before. Knock on the door,  
Xanthias. (*knocks*)  
Greetings, Herakles. Please be kind and tell us the way to  
Hades.

Her: Greetings, Dionysus. Why do you want to go there?

Dion: I need to speak to Euripides about...

Xan: (*interrupting*) He has a 'yearning' for the poet! All day  
long he sits and sighs for him:

(To the tune of "Beauty and the Beast")

Tales as old as time  
Gorgeous poetry  
Tragedy is gone  
Died in Macedon  
Oh, Euripides!

The way he turned a phrase  
Melodic litanies  
Dactylic hexameter

Iambic pentameter  
Oh, Euripides!

Lines like ‘foot of time’  
In the *Andromache*  
*The Trojan Women* fall  
*The Bacchae* have a ball  
Oh, Euripides!

Her: Oh, I see. A ‘yearning.’ Well, you can always gaze upon  
Artemis naked, get turned into a stag and be ripped apart by  
your own hounds.

Dion: No! I don’t want to be dismembered again.

Her: (*sigh*) In that case, I suggest you follow the path to the  
River. Here, take my lionskin. Charon may let you pass.

Dion: Many thanks!

[*Exit Herakles and Chorus upstage. Dionysus and Xanthias (still humming the tune) continue down into the audience and back to the River Styx, made of sticks. There is a sign posted.*]

Dion: Ah ha! At last, the Styx. Now where’s that boatman?

(To the tune of “Swing low, Sweet Chariot”)

Swing low, sweet Charon  
Coming for the ferry me down  
Swing low, sweet Charon  
Coming for the ferry me down

I looked over Styx  
And what did I see  
Coming for the ferry me down?

[*Enter Chorus.*]

I saw a band of squirrels  
Coming after me  
Coming for to ferry me down

[*with Chorus*]

Swing low, sweet Charon  
Coming for the ferry me down  
Swing low, sweet Charon  
Coming for the ferry me down

Hey! Where’s Charon?

Chorus: Brekekekex, crack nuts, crack nuts. Brekekekex, crack  
nuts, crack nuts. Read the sign (*they point*).

Dion: (*reading*) ‘Gone to Ethiopia. Row your own Damned  
self.’ I can’t row myself! I won’t. I’m an intellectual, not a  
member of the crew team! I’m not made for this rough stuff.  
Besides, (*weakly*) I haven’t passed my swimming test yet...

[*Xanthias crosses the sticks while Dionysus has his fit.*]

Chorus: (*in a round, suggested thrice*)

(To the tune of “Row, row, row your boat”)

Row, row, row yourself  
Across the river Styx  
Tragically, tragically, tragically, tragically  
The boat is filled with bricks!

[*Dionysus tries to join in, finally catches on to last round and rows across during the song. Exit.*]

Chorus: *(to audience)* Brekekekex, crack nuts, crack nuts.

Brekekekex, crack nuts, crack nuts.

Dionysus has gone to Hades in the guise of Herakles

And those of you who speak it different, listen to us please:

Herakles is proper Greek, 'tis what all squirrels say

And if you call him Hercules, write your own damned play!

Now God and slave will find themselves knocking on Hell's door

Since Cerberus was carried off, he isn't welcome anymore

Lord Hades is quite the grouch, but loves his tragedy

And if he'll let his poets out, well, we can only see!

*[Exit Chorus into House. Enter Dionysus and Xanthias from right. They go to the door to Hades.]*

Dion: There you are, Xanthias! *[Goes up to knock but then shrinks back]* Be quick, man, and knock on the door.

*[Xanthias does and steps back.]*

Maid 1: *(calling)* Who's there? *[Comes to stand in doorway.]*

Oh! It's you! You're the brute who stole our dog! *[Turns back and calls while retreating inside.]* Aiakos! Aiakos! Herakles

is back! May we lynch him?

Dion: *(afraid)* Xanthias, take this skin and give me the bag.

Xan: Ooooooh, you're not afraid of the maid, are you? *[Switches skin, club, and bag.]*

Dion: Hush, you. There. Now, knock again.

*[Xanthias does.]*

Maid 2: *(calling)* Who's there? *[Comes to stand in doorway.]*

Herakles? *[Xanthias nods and poses.]* Is that really you? *[Gets 'sexy.']* Oh, you must be soooo hungry. You wait; I'll be back with something nice and hot. *[Exits.]*

Dion: Hey! It's not fair that you get the girls! Give me back my lion skin.

*[Before the exchange can take place, Aiakas enters with a whip.]*

Aia: Ah ha! It is you, Herakles, the bottomless pit who stole our dog. Prepare for a beating!

Xan: Wait! Beat my slave instead. He'll tell you the truth, that I am really a God here on important family business with Hades.

Aia: I see. Come here, slave, and bend over.

Dion: He lies! I am the God.

Xan: No, I am.

Dion: No, I am!

Aia: What? This is too confusing. I'll just beat the both of you.  
*(To the tune of "Reviewing the Situation")*

I'm reviewing the situation

One is Herakles, and one is just a slave

And this whipping will prove their station

The stalwart is the God, the weak the knave

And the whip will surely prove to me  
The human from the deity  
So bend over, grip your knees  
Hey, this IS Aristophanes  
They both seem to be at their ease  
Will one of you just whimper, please?  
I think I'd better think it out again

*[During the beating, Dionysus and Xanthias struggle to hide their pain.]*

Hmmm...I know! I'll take them both to Hades. He'll be able to tell the two of them apart.

*[Exit all into the house. Enter Chorus.]*

Chorus: Our heroes made it safely through the dipylon of Hell  
Mark their entrance with a drum roll and the ringing of a bell  
For family ties are useful, when favors one must win  
And Hades will do anything for his favorite kin  
But wait! There by the Poet's chair stands another of the type  
Not Euripides, but Aeschylus, smoking on his pipe.  
It seems there's been a quarrel for the honor of the Chair  
And now they lurk around about, exchanging vile stares  
At contest, then, would be the best, to sort this whole mess out  
The winner gets to visit Earth while the loser cries and pouts  
So Dionysus, listen to this trial in your name  
Don't forget, the goal is to make Tragedy Rise Again!

*[During, enter Hades, the two Poets, Dionysus, and Xanthias.]*

Eur: As the favorite of the God, I demand that I go first. The poetry that I will quote will be far more stirring than anything old Tortoise-head can recite. Ahem.

(Euripides *Bacchae*, lines 65-70,— to the tune of "Yellow Rose of Texas")

Out of the land Asia,  
Down from holy Tmolus,  
Speeding the service of the god,  
For Bromius we come!  
Hard are the labors of the god;  
Hard, but his service is sweet.  
Sweet to serve, sweet to cry:  
Bacchus!  
Evohé!

*[Applause.]*

Dion: (to Hades) He certainly does know how to flatter a body, doesn't he? *(all turn to Hades)*

Hades: *(Nods)*

Dion: Next!

Aes: *(walks out, slow, swaggering. Pauses for very dramatic effect)* Yo.

*[Silence.]*

Dion: Wow! That was incredible! The poem clearly indicates the tragic nature of the social rift between those who comprehend one syllable statements and the "Other" who cannot.  
*(all turn to Hades)*

Hades: (*Nods.*)

Dion: This is what we need. Such literature will promote understanding for the “Other.” I have made my choice.

Aeschylus will return to Earth with me.

(*all turn to Hades*)

Hades: (*Nods.*)

Chorus and all other characters:

(To the tune of “Anything Goes”)

In olden day we loved Euripides

But now we’ve had epiphanies, Hades knows

Aeschylus goes!

Good authors too who once knew better words

Now only use four-letter words or write in prose

Aeschylus goes!

With the dead today

They both read today

And we chose today

Which one goes today

And the Squirrels today

Were played by GIRLS today

With sheets over their clothes

We’ve done our best to be comedians

Playing the great tragedians, so we close:

And Aeschylus goes!

**-FIN-**