

Cupid and Psyche

*A Play in Three Acts
for Fifth Grade*

by

Roberto Trostli

The Hartsbrook School
193 Bay Road
Hadley, MA 01035
(413) 586-1908
rtrostli@hartsbrook.org

Author's note:

This play is one of a group of plays written for the classes I taught at the Rudolf Steiner School in New York from 1982–1991 and at The Hartsbrook School in Hadley, MA from 1991-1999. The theme of each play was chosen to address a particular class's issues and interests, and the characters were rendered with specific students in mind.

When other teachers and classes have performed my plays, I have encouraged them to adapt or revise the play as necessary to derive the maximum pedagogical value from it. Other class's performances have showed me artistic dimensions of my plays that I could not have imagined, and I have always been grateful to see that my work has taken on new life.

I have posted my plays on the Online Waldorf Library as Microsoft Word documents so that they can easily be downloaded and changed. I have purposely given few stage directions so that teachers and students will make the plays more their own.

Dear Colleagues: I hope that these plays will serve you well as inspiration, as a scaffold on which to build your own creation, or as a script to make your own. Please don't hesitate to take whatever liberties you wish so that the play may serve you in your work. If you have questions, don't hesitate to phone or email me.

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Cast of Characters:

Jupiter
Pluto
Apollo
Mercury
Cupid
Juno
Venus
Ceres
Iris
Persephone
King
Queen
Sister 1
Sister 2
Psyche
Priest
Beggar
Servant 1
Servant 2
Brother West Wind
Old Habit
Charon
Spirit 1
Spirit 2
Two Choruses of the Actors

PROLOGUE

scene i - On earth

Chorus I: Hail to the fairest of maidens!
Blessing our lives with her beauty.

Chorus II: Hail to the goddess incarnate!
Blessing our hearts with her love.

Chorus I: Come thou, O fairest new Venus—
Come and dwell ever among us.

Chorus II: Hear thou our prayer, dearest goddess,
Bless thou our love with thine own.

scene ii - On Mount Olympus

Venus: They call her the new Venus?
They call her by my name?
O Juno, I'm dishonored,
And cannot stand the shame!

Juno: Don't worry, Venus darling,
For none can take your place;
You have the greatest share by far
Of beauty, charm and grace.

Venus: To her they sacrifice and pray
And offer gifts divine;
O Ceres, I can't let her steal
The honor that is mine.

Ceres: I promise you, dear Venus,
This fad will quickly pass;
Let's have a smile, my pretty one,
No need to be downcast.

Juno: No matter what may happen
Whatever might befall—
You know that you were judged to be
The loveliest of all.

Venus: They'd better stop this nonsense
And honor me once more,
Or I will hunt that hussy down—
Of that you can be sure.

ACT I

scene i - In the king's palace

Chorus I: Can there be no mortal now living
 To take this fair maiden to wife?

Chorus II: Can beauty so lovely and radiant
 Exist on the earth without strife?

Chorus I: Behold her father and mother—
 Who hardly know what they should do;

Chorus II: Behold her sisters—what schemers—
 Who wait to give Psyche her due.

King: Are there no worthy noblemen
 A-dwelling in this land?
 Yet to this day not one has come
 To seek our daughter's hand.

 Who would have thought, my dearest wife
 That Psyche, sweet and fair,
 Despite her beauty, charm, and grace,
 Of marriage must despair.

Queen: Perhaps the people's worship
 Has brought about this curse,
 Perhaps her very loveliness
 Has made the problem worse.

King: I do not know if she's transgressed
 Or erred in innocence;
 But we must now placate the gods
 And make our recompense.

Queen: To sacred Delphi we must go
 To seek the Pythoness;
 She will instruct us what to do
 And how to make redress.

(The King and Queen leave travel to Delphi.)

Priest: Thy fate will be revealed by her
 Who serves the god of light
 The mists that come from deep below
 Will give her second sight.

(The Priest takes the gold into the temple. After a few moments, the Pythoness comes out with her attendants.)

Pythoness: On the eve of the feast of fair Venus
 Will thy lovely young daughter be wed;
 On the peak she must wait for her husband,
 For the creature so reckless and wild;
 The beast will then claim her forever,
 Though his face must to her be unknown,
 No more will she dwell among mortals
 But forever will she be his own.

Queen: Alas for my sweet Psyche,
 My dearest daughter fair!

King: To give you to a wild beast
 Is more than I can bear.

Chorus I: While the king and the queen are despairing
 The goddess of love makes her plans;

Chorus II: Behold the bright scheme she's preparing
 To take this fair maid off her hands.

scene iv - In the palace of Venus on Mount Olympus

Venus: O Cupid my lovely, my sweetest young son,
 Can I have a favor, a wee little one...

Cupid: You don't need to flatter,
 You just have to ask;
 So out with it, mother,
 And tell me the task

Venus: Ah, how can I put it most delicately
 There's a mortal who thinks that she's fairer than me;
 My temples are empty, my altars are cold,
 The people are saying that I'm getting old;
 The next thing you know they'll be worshipping her
 And I'll be forgotten and—

Cupid: O don't be so ridiculous!
 Your worries are quite ludicrous!

Venus: O Cupid, please help me, I ask you again,
Find me this maiden and take careful aim;
Make sure that she's driven clear out of her mind
With love for the ugliest man you can find;
She'll be mocked and dishonored and people will see
That they'd better get right back to worshipping me.

Cupid: For your sake, dear mother I'll give it a shot;
But even the best plans don't always work out.

scene v - On the way to the mountaintop

Psyche: Weep not, dear mother, do not weep,
But let our hearts be gay;
Apollo's prophesy was clear:
It is my wedding day.

Queen: Ah, would that it were true, my love
Then we would not bewail.

King: I fear, however that the beast
Will eat you in his lair.

Psyche: Whatever happens, I believe
Apollo knows what's best;
So do not sorrow, but rejoice
And try the gods to trust.

scene vi - On the way to earth

Mercury: O where are you going, young Cupid,
With your arrows of love and your bright gilded bow?

Cupid: Let's talk as we walk, uncle Mercury,
For down to earth I quickly must go.

(Cupid and Mercury walk down to earth.)

There's a lovely young princess named Psyche
Whose beauty is wearing on Venus's nerves;
So I have been given instructions
To make sure that this girl gets the fate she deserves.

Mercury: I will gladly escort you, dear nephew,
For this errand indeed seems like marvelous sport;
(aside) I will keep a close watch on the action
And who knows what tonight I will have to report.

Cupid: Now there is the girl that I'm seeking—
 I can see why my old mom is jealous of you—
 But where can I find an old beggar?
 And then we shall see what my arrows can do.

Mercury: Now wouldn't it be a comeuppance
 If Cupid for once were his arrow's own mark?
 Let's see if I cannot arrange it
 That he prick himself with his very own dart.

(As the king, the queen, and Psyche make their way up the mountain, a beggar approaches them.)

Beggar: O noble princess, I implore,
 Have pity on the poor!
 A little charity, I pray,

(Psyche stops to give the beggar some alms.)

My blessings be upon thy way.

Mercury: Come quickly, come quickly, young rascal,
 For there is the ugly old beggar you seek!

Cupid: How perfect! My thanks, you old codger,
 Now see how much havoc my arrows can wreak.

Mercury: O Cupid, that arrow is blunted,
 You'd best use a better one, take it from me;

Cupid: My arrows are all newly sharpened
 See here, how the point is as keen as can be.

(As Cupid shows Mercury how sharp his arrows are, Mercury bumps into him, causing him to prick himself with his arrow.)

Cupid: O Mercury, what have you done?

(Cupid looks at Psyche and falls on his knees)

Cupid: O Psyche, fairest, sweetest one!
 For you, for you, my heart does yearn
 For you, for you, my heart does burn!
 From this day forth you will be mine
 From this day forth I will be thine.
 Come quickly to your lover true
 Or he will die for love of you.

Mercury: Now that was a trick well worth playing—
 A marvelous trick, I myself must confess,
 And now I must leave my poor nephew,
 Whose arrows have caused him the greatest distress.

Chorus I: Lethal are Cupid's bright arrows
 None can escape from their sting;

Chorus II: The beast that fair Psyche must marry
 Is wild with the love that they bring.

ACT II

scene i - In Cupid's earthly palace

Chorus I: Blow, blow, sweet and low
 Dear gentle wind of the west;

Chorus II: Blow, blow, soft and slow,
 Ease Psyche over the crest.

Chorus I: Come set her down on this meadow green,
 Bring her to Cupid to be his queen;

Chorus II: Blow, blow, sweet and low,
 Dear gentle wind of the west.

(Brother West Wind brings Psyche down to earth.)

Psyche: Behold a glorious palace!
 Is this to be my home?
 But where is my betrothed,
 Who's claimed me for his own?

Servant 1: Our greetings noble mistress
 We are thy servants true.

Servant 2: Our greetings fairest mistress
 What would'st thou have us do?

Servant 3: Dost want a sumptuous banquet,
 Or precious lovely clothes?

Servant 2: Dost want sweet music for thy ears
 A bed for thy repose?

Servant 1: Whatever thou dost want or wish
 We promise to provide.

Servant 3: For lo, our good lord has decreed
Thou must be satisfied.

(The servants minister to Psyche and make her comfortable.)

scene ii - In Cupid's earthly palace.

(Cupid is hidden behind a screen. A light shining from behind allows his form to be seen.)

Psyche: I've been ever so happy, dear husband
Living with you in this place,
Yet deep in my heart I'm a little distressed
That I never have seen your face.

Cupid: As I told you, my own sweetest Psyche,
I must keep my features concealed.
If ever you saw me then I'd have to leave,
For my secret would be revealed.

Psyche: What secret is this, my beloved,
That you hide from your own dearest wife?
I promise to keep every secret of yours
For all of the rest of my life.

Cupid: I cannot divulge it, my treasure,
Believe me it's all for best,
But I have to warn you there's danger ahead
For you will be put to a test.

Psyche: What danger could there be, my precious?
In our palace I feel so secure;

Cupid: Your sisters are coming to visit you soon,
And they mean to harm, you I am sure.

Psyche: My sisters? To harm me? What nonsense!
I'm certain that you must be wrong.
O I will be glad just to see them again
For it really has been much too long.

Cupid: Beware of your sisters, I warn you,
They're jealous and proud as can be;
But I beg you to promise me never to tell
Whatever you know about me.

Psyche: Of course I will promise, my darling,
Your secrets are safe in my heart,
Just tell Brother West Wind to waft them to me
When our visit is ready to start.

scene iii - In Cupid's earthly palace

(Psyche's sisters approach the mountaintop.)

Chorus I: Blow, blow, sweet and low,
 Dear gentle wind of the west;

Chorus II: Blow, blow, don't you know
 This visit is Psyche's request.

Chorus I: If only you could Cupid's orders ignore
 And keep Psyche's sisters away from her door.

Chorus II: Blow, blow, sweet and low,
 Dear gentle wind of the west.

(Psyche's sisters enter Cupid's palace.)

Sister 1: Psyche!

Sister 2: Darling! How are you?

Psyche: Quite well, dear sisters, and you?

Sister 1: We're fine, just fine, fair Psyche,
 But tell about this place.

Sister 2: When we came home to visit you,
 We heard about the beast.

Sister 1: O yes, we were so frightened
 We thought you must be dead.

Sister 2: But look at you, so richly dressed
 You must be nobly wed.

Psyche: Before I tell my story,
 Let's have a bite to eat.
 Come sit down here and I will ask
 My servants for a treat.

(Psyche summons the servants.)

Psyche: Come serve my loving sisters
 With tea and cakes so fine;
(in a whisper) And bring some jewels for I wish
 To give them gifts divine.

(The servants bring out tea and cakes and a chest of jewels.)

Sister 1: So tell, praytell, dear Psyche
 Where did you get this loot?

Sister 2: According to the oracle
 You've married quite a brute.

Psyche: What foolishness, what nonsense!
 He's slender, young, and gay,
 He likes to go out hunting
 And sometimes stays all day.

Sister 2: So you are happy with him?
 There's nothing that you lack?

Psyche: No, not a thing...except that I...
 You must be getting back!

Sister 1: What did you say, my dearest?

Psyche: O, nothing, not a thing;
 Here, take this necklace as a gift
 And you may have this ring.

(Psyche nervously shoos her sisters out.)

Psyche: Please give my love to mother
 And tell her naught's amiss.
 Come visit me again someday,
 And give Papa a kiss.

scene iv - On the way back from Cupid's palace

Sister 1: So Psyche's fortune has been made,
 What do you think of that?

Sister 2: Now tell me why we always lose
 While she gets all the luck.

Sister 1: And did you note her servants
 Who heed her slightest whim?

Sister 2: She acted like she could not stand us
 Though we are her kin.

Sister 1: Her presents were so stingy;
 She had a lot of gall!

Sister 2: She certainly was eager
 To shoo us from her hall.

Sister 1: Tell no one of our visit
 But let us plot revenge;

Sister 2: The insults that we've suffered
 Will one day be avenged.

scene v - In Cupid's earthly palace

Cupid: I'm glad they have left, my sweet Psyche
 For they cannot be trusted, I know;
 But now that they've come, there is surely no need
 To invite them again to our home.

Psyche: O don't be so silly, dear husband,
 For I cherish my sisters so much;
 I told them I wanted to see them again
 For it's so nice to keep in touch.

Cupid: Beware of your sisters, I warn you,
 For they wear their love like a mask.
 I beg you again not to say anything
 About me to them if they ask.

Psyche: I can hardly say that I know you,
 For never your face I have seen;
 If you would consent just to grant me one peek
 Then I'd feel more secure as your queen.

Cupid: Be patient, my dear, my beloved,
 For the sake of the love that we share
 If you can but wait, then the child of our love
 Will be an immortal, I swear.

 Remember my words, dearest Psyche
 For I speak but to shield you from pain,
 For you could avoid a most terrible fate
 If you don't see your sisters again.

Psyche: I will wait and be patient, my darling,
 And your secrets are safe as can be;
 Now summon the West Wind to blow once again
 And to bring back my sisters to me.

scene vi - In Cupid's earthly palace

(Psyche's sisters approach the mountaintop again.)

- Chorus I: Blow, blow, sweet and low
Dear gentle wind of the west;
- Chorus II: Would that a furious storm would blow
To hurl these two to their death.
- Chorus I: Bring them down here for Psyche doth pine,
Bring them again for the very last time.
- Chorus II: Blow, blow, sweet and low,
Dear gentle wind of the west.
- Sister 1: Psyche dear! Just look at you!
- Sister 2: When is the baby due?
- Psyche: I must confess I do not know;
But tell me: How are you?
- Sister 1: I wonder what he'll look like...
Perhaps like his Papa?
- Sister 2: O please describe your husband,
I'm sorry, I've forgot.
- Psyche: He is a wealthy merchant
(hesitantly) Quite tall and fairly stout,
I'm sorry you can't meet him,
For he has just gone out.

(As Psyche leads them inside, the two sisters give each other knowing looks.)

- Psyche: If you will please excuse me,
I really must lie down,
- Sister 2: Don't mind us, little sister,
- Sister 1: We'll do just fine alone.

(Psyche calls the servants and instructs them to take care of her sister, then she exits.)

- Sister 2: That wretched little liar!
I know there's something wrong:
The first time she described him
As slender, gay, and strong.

Sister 1: (sarcastically) O no, you are mistaken,
 He's wealthy, stout, and tall!
 She must think we are imbeciles
 Who have no minds at all.

Sister 2: She's plainly hiding something,
 She doesn't want to show,
 Perhaps she's married to a god
 And we're not meant to know.

Sister 1: I know I couldn't bear it
 If that indeed were true;
 O Psyche—you have all the luck—
 Has some god married you?

Sister 2: Perhaps she is not lying,
 Perhaps she cannot say,
 Perhaps she's never even seen
 Her wild fiancée.

Sister 1: If that were true, then listen:
 I know what we must do—

(The first sister whispers her plan to her sister.)

Sister 2: O sister, you are brilliant,
 I'll play along with you.

scene vii - In Cupid's earthly palace

Servant 1: Beware, beware, O mistress
 Take heed of our alarm!

Servant 2: Beware, beware, O mistress
 Thy sisters mean thee harm!

Servant 3: They will ask many questions
 So watch whate'er you say

3 Servants: No matter what they tell thee,
 Do not thy lord betray!

(Psyche is startled by the servants' warning, but she tries not to show it.)

Sister 1: O, are you feeling better?
 Come here and have a seat.
 There's something we would ask you
 Come here, my love, my sweet.

Psyche: Yes, I am feeling better,
 Though just a little ill,
 I hope while I was lying down
 My servants fed you well.

Sister 1: There's something I must ask you
 That's gnawing at my heart.
 Who is your husband anyway?
 I'll die if I don't know.

Servant 1: Beware, beware, O mistress!
 The trap has been prepared.

Servant 2: Beware, beware, O mistress!
 Let not thyself be snared.

Sister 2: We really wouldn't press you
 Except that we have heard
 That your life is in danger
 And we are much concerned.

Sister 1: So tell the truth, for we must know
 The truth and nothing less;
 Who is your husband? Psyche tell
 Your sisters whom you trust.

Servant 3: Beware, beware, O mistress,
 For lo, the trap is sprung!
 Don't tell thy sisters any more
 Of thy beloved one.

Psyche: O sisters dear, I cannot say,
 I cannot tell you more!
 I'm telling you the very truth:
 I've never seen my lord!

 He comes to me in dark of night
 But does not show his face;
 He flees before the morning light
 And does not leave a trace.

(The servants exit in alarm.)

Sister 1: There, there, dear little sister,
 You will not come to harm;
 We thought that this might be the case;
 For now you can be warned.

Sister 2: Your husband is the wild beast
 The oracle foretold;
 The shepherds saw him just last night
 As he was coming home.

Sister 1: He is a cruel, ferocious snake
 A creature fierce and wild.
 He cannot wait until the day
 When you shall bear his child.

Sister 2: And then he will reveal himself
 And tear you limb from limb;
 O Psyche, are you brave enough
 To stay and punish him?

Psyche: What must I do, praytell me,
 For I feel so confused...

Sister 1: Don't worry, little Psyche,
 We'll tell you what to do.

(The sisters whisper Psyche instructions.)

Sister 1: And after you have slain him
 You must come home with us
 We'll take the creatures treasures home
 And leave this awful place.

ACT III

scene i - In Cupid's earthly palace

(Psyche enters carrying a large knife and a lamp.)

Psyche: A cruel, ferocious, wild beast
 Who feasts on human flesh?
 And yet he seemed so gentle
 And full of tenderness.

They said to stab him in the chest
 And then chop off his head;
 Be brave my heart, be strong my hand
 That I may strike him dead.

(Psyche moves back the screen, puts the lamp down, and raises the knife high, ready to stab Cupid.)

Psyche: O gods above! Behold my love!
No wild beast is he!

(Psyche comes closer to look at Cupid as he sleeps.)

Psyche: O Cupid—god of love himself—
And you have married me?

How could I not have guessed it,
Or known it from the start?
But let me see his arrows—
I've heard they're very sharp!

(As Psyche examines Cupid's arrows, she pricks herself. In her passion, she wakes up Cupid.)

Psyche: O Cupid, Cupid, lord of love
O how my heart's aglow!
O sweetest, dearest Cupid,
O how I love you so!

scene ii - In Cupid's earthly palace

(Cupid wakes up, and rushes out from behind the screen. Psyche follows.)

Cupid: O I was young and foolish
To think our love would last,
To think that it would all work out—
But now our love is past.

Psyche: O Cupid, I'm so sorry,
You know I meant no ill;
Just tell me what I have to do
Your anger to dispell.

Cupid: You chose to trust your sisters,
And did not trust your heart
I'll see they get what they deserve
And now I must depart.

Psyche: O Cupid, do not leave me,
Have mercy on your wife;
I cannot bear to see you go
And part from me in strife.

Cupid: I'm sorry, dearest Psyche,
I cannot stay with you;
But now I have to leave this place
And bid my love adieu.

(Cupid leaves his palace without looking back, and Psyche wanders off weeping.)

scene iii - On the mountainside

Sister 1: I wonder if she's done the deed
And thus fulfilled our plan.

Sister 2: I bet she was too cowardly
To take a knife in hand.

Sister 1: Perhaps she really did it,

Sister 2: Perhaps she fled in fear,

Sister 1: In any case—that treasure
Is yours and mine, my dear.

Sister 2: Unless we go, we'll never know,
So let us hurry back.

Sister 1: Brother West Wind, hurry up!
Come on, and don't be slack!

Cupid: Blow, blow, to and fro,
Fierce vengeful wind of the west.
Hurl them down to the rocks below,
Dash these two to their death.

For they have betrayed my own dearest wife
And forced me to leave the love of my life.
Blow, blow, to and fro,
Fierce vengeful wind of the west.

(Brother West Wind hurls the two sisters down and they crawl off to die.)

scene iv - On Mount Olympus

Venus: What's this that I hear of my Cupid:
He's married a mortal? It cannot be true!
But let me catch up with that scoundrel,
And there's no predicting just what I will do.

Juno: Calm down, calm down, dear Venus,
Calm down and don't you fret;
Perhaps it's just a rumor;
No need to get upset.

Ceres: But if it's true, what of it?
Why can't he have some fun?
Although you treat him like a child
He's not so very young.

- Venus: If he's married a mortal, I'll kill him!
 I will tear him to pieces, just you wait and see.
 I will never forgive those dumb mortals,
 Who worshiped that girl and compared her to me.
- Juno: Don't worry, dearest Venus,
 Sit back and take it slow,
 For here comes Iris back from earth
 And she is sure to know.
- Iris: I have plenty of news, fairest Venus,
 Though you may not be happy with all that you hear;
 I've been trying to track down a rumor
 That said that young Cupid was married last year.
- Venus: So tell me, tell me quickly!
 And don't leave out a thing.
 Has Cupid really married
 Or only had a fling?
- Iris: It's true, it's true, I'm sorry—
 But I haven't discovered the name of the bride.
- Venus: I knew it! I knew it! I knew it!
 I'll never recoup from this blow to my pride.
- Ceres: There there, my lovely Venus,
 It can't be all that bad.
- Juno: All children are ungrateful beasts,
 But O, you must be sad!
- Venus: I am not sad, I'm furious,
 My son's a total dunce!
 Old Habit, go right down to the earth
 And find my son at once.

scene v - On Mount Olympus

(Old Habit comes in pulling Cupid by the ear.)

- Venus: Behold the mindless creature
 I'm ashamed to call my son.
 Don't tell me any stories
 Just say what you have done.

Cupid: O mother, I am sorry
That I have caused you pain;
I meant to shoot fair Psyche
And bring her down in shame.

Instead I pricked my finger
And fell in love with her—

Venus: With her? With her? That creature?
You fell in love with her?

Cupid: I planned to tell you sooner,
I have my speech rehearsed—

(Cupid pulls out a scroll and begins to make a speech)

Venus: Don't say another word to me—
You'll only make it worse.
Go to your room this minute!

(Cupid starts off, with a hurt expression)

Venus: And there's no need to pout;
And when I'm good and ready,
Perhaps I'll let you out.

Old Habit, go back down to earth
And find that girl for me,
Then bring her back to me at once,
And then—we'll see, we'll see. . . .

Ceres: O Venus, dearest Venus,
Have mercy on your son;
You know we all make our mistakes,
He's not the only one.

Juno: Remember that he is your son
Don't be too hard on him;
Remember he's the god of love,
And loving is no sin.

Venus: Don't say another word to me,
Don't mention it again,
Go now and leave me all alone
To plan my sweet revenge.

(Juno, Ceres, and Iris pretend to exit but stay behind to eavesdrop.)

scene vi - On Mount Olympus

Old Habit enters dragging Psyche by the arm. Psyche falls on her knees before Venus, not daring to look at her face.)

Venus: So you're the pretty creature
 Who has bewitched my son?
 So you're the famous Psyche
 So you're the fairest one?

 So you're the one who snared my son
 And caught him in your spell?
 I guess that I should bow my head
 And worship you as well!

Psyche: Have mercy, fairest Venus
 For sure I meant no harm...

Venus: Did I hear you admit it?
 That I'm the fairest one?

Psyche: I never asked for honor,
 I never asked for fame,
 I never asked the people
 To call me by thy name.

Venus: I'm glad to hear you say it
 But the damage has been done,
 And Venus is now mocked by all
 Because you've trapped her son.

Psyche: I never meant to trap him—

Venus: Be still and listen well:
 There's only one way out of here
 My lovely little belle.

 You must go down to Hades
 And ask Persephone
 To fill this casket with her charm
 And bring it back to me.

Psyche: To Hades? Down to Hades?
 This surely means my doom.

(Cupid calls sweetly from offstage.)

Cupid: Can I come out now, mother dear?

Venus: Get back into your room!

Venus: (sweetly) Now off with you, my precious one
And do the best you can.

(Psyche looks imploringly at Venus, raises up her arms, and speaks, but Venus continues without even listening to her.)

Psyche: O please have mercy, Venus—

Venus: And don't come back until you have
Brought back what I demand.

(Psyche walks dejectedly offstage.)

I'll gladly bet a fortune
That down there she will stay,
But if perchance she does return
I'll find another way.

(Venus sees the goddesses hiding, and they scurry off stage.)

scene vii - On the way to the underworld

Psyche: How dreary, dark and dismal
Is this land of the dead,
Yet I must still continue
Though I am filled with dread.

Spirit 1: Turn back, turn back, O Psyche
Go back the way you came;
For all who cross the River Styx
Must evermore remain.

Psyche: What spirit is this speaking
With disembodied voice?
Yet I must scorn its warning
For I have made my choice.

Spirit 2: Turn back, turn back, O Psyche
Turn back while yet you may;
For none may leave these darkened halls
But evermore must stay.

Psyche: I must strive ever onward
Despite these warnings clear,
I pray my love will shield me
And help me quell my fear.

Charon: Mortal, mortal, come not hence,
 Quickly leave this place.
 Charon cannot carry thee
 Across the River Styx.

Psyche: Take pity on poor Psyche
 And on her broken heart,
 I come but for an hour
 And then I will depart.

Charon: Psyche, Psyche, is it thou?
 Fairest of the fair?
 For thy purest beauty's sake
 Charon will thee bear.

(Charon carries Psyche across the River Styx and points the way to the hall of Pluto and Persephone.)

Pluto: Mortal, kneel before me here
 State why thou hast come;
 Those who enter Hades' halls
 Nevermore return.

Psyche: I beg thy pardon, Lord of Death,
 I know I have been bold,
 Yet I would claim thy grace for love
 Like Orpheus of old.

Persephone: And who, my child, has sent thee?
 And what is your request?

Psyche: Thy cousin Venus sent me;
 I come at her behest.
 She clearly doesn't like me;
 Perhaps she means me harm;
 She sent me here to bring her back
 A little of thy charm.

Persephone: How innocent you are, my dear,
 She sent thee to thy death!
 And yet we will outfox her
 By granting her request.

(Persephone looks at Pluto, who nods his assent.)

I will now fill this casket,
 With beauty, charm, and wit,
 But you must leave it tightly closed
 And let her open it.

(Persephone takes the casket to the side, fills it, and gives it back to Psyche.)

Psyche: I am forever in thy debt,
 And thine, my gracious lord,
 And now I have to hurry back
 To claim my love's reward.

(Charon carries Psyche back across the Styx.)

Spirit 1: Farewell, farewell, dear Psyche
 Rejoin the world above.

Spirit 2: Farewell, farewell, dear Psyche
 Return to find your love.

scene viii On the way back from Hades

(Psyche walks slowly, carrying the casket toward Olympus.)

Psyche: Now that I have the casket
 Will Venus grant my wish:
 To live again with Cupid
 Forevermore in bliss?

But what if he still shuns me
 Because I disobeyed?
 He might not want to see me
 If he still feels betrayed.

But if I took a little
 Of what is in this chest,
 Then I would have such grace and charm
 That he could not resist.

(Psyche opens the casket; a cloud of sleep escapes and engulfs her.)

Psyche: I feel so very sleepy,
 I think I must lie down
 Perhaps, my love, dear Cupid...

(Psyche falls asleep. Meanwhile, Cupid has snuck out of his room and has come down to earth.)

Cupid: What lovely maiden can that be
 Who slumbers on the ground?
 Why, it's my own sweet Psyche,
 Who's come back safe and sound.

(Cupid gathers up the cloud of sleep and rouses Psyche.)

Cupid: Wake up, wake up, dear Psyche
 Wake up, for I am here.

Psyche: Is this a dream? I've slept so long—
Is that my lord, my dear?

Cupid: Yes, it is I, fair Psyche,
My own beloved bride,
And from this day I swear to stay
Forever by thy side.

(Cupid and Psyche walk up to Olympus hand in hand.)

EPILOGUE

(All the gods but Venus are all assembled. Cupid enters with Psyche.)

Chorus II: All of the gods are assembled;
Cupid's been making his case,
Will they agree that he may keep his bride
And dwell evermore in bliss?

Jupiter: We have heard all your arguments Cupid
And to me they appear very sound,
But come, let us hear what the gods have to say;
I suggest that we go right around.

Juno: O Jupiter, I do agree
With you, my wise old lord.

Jupiter:
(aside) Old?

Ceres: And I agree that Cupid
Should have his just reward.

Jupiter:
(aside) Ah yes.

Apollo: I said it through my oracle
What was already known:
That this wild beast would claim her forever,
And forever she would be his own.

Jupiter:
(aside) He did indeed.

Mercury: I will gladly now state my opinion,
Since I got my dear nephew in all of this mess;

Jupiter:
(aside) You certainly did!

Mercury: I think he should have his fair Psyche
And we should be happy their marriage to bless.

(All of the gods applaud. Iris looks hurt that she hasn't yet spoken.)

Iris: I too think that Cupid's entitled
To have the bride of his choice

Jupiter: Quite a choice!
(aside)

(Venus appears, sleepy and yawning.)

Venus: O why did no one call me?

(Venus realizes that the gods are in council.)

Venus: Since when have I no voice?

Jupiter: O you just missed the voting, fair Venus,
Next time get up early and don't oversleep.
But we have all reached the conclusion
That Cupid forever his Psyche may keep.

Venus: But, but...I...

Jupiter: I know you don't like our decision,
But you win some, you lose some, that's always
the way;
And all of us can now be certain
That Cupid will put his sharp arrows away.

Venus: But, but....

Jupiter: Come, come;

All the gods: don't be so glum!

(Venus splutters a bit more, then she smiles and reaches out her arms to Psyche.)

Venus: Now I welcome you truly, dear daughter
No more will I quarrel with you,
For though I've become an old mother-in-law,
I can still break a heart or two.

(Venus stands center stage with one arm around Psyche and the other around Cupid.)

All the gods: Come let us bless these lovers
 For two have been made one.
 And what in life and love is joined
 Must never be undone.

Chorus II: Yes, let us bless these lovers
 For two have been made one.
 And what in life and love is joined
 Must never be undone.

(The Company exits.)