WENDY. But the conclusions were the same.

ALL TESTERS. She doesn’t test well.

WENDY. My mother was inconsolable.

MOTHER. Oh, Stewart, I’m inconsolable.

FATHER. You seem inconsolable.

MOTHER. I am inconsolable! Why don’t you help me?

FATHER. Well, technically, if you’re truly inconsolable, nothing I do will...

MOTHER. (Threatening:) Stewart!

FATHER. Let me hug you, Pookie. There, there. It’ll be all right.

MOTHER. She doesn’t test well!

FATHER. I know, I know!

MOTHER. How can she get through life if she doesn’t test well?

FATHER. Cry me a river. That’s right.

MOTHER. In school, in life, in careers—she’ll have tests!

FATHER. Let it out, Honeybun. It’s okay.

MOTHER. She’ll have exams. She’ll have her permit test, her driver’s test, her SAT’s, her ACT’s...

FATHER. Her NAACP’s, her PDQ’s, her...

MOTHER. (Breaking away:) Now you’re being dumb.

FATHER. Sorry.

MOTHER. What’ll we do? What ever will we do?

PROTest SALESMAN. Child doesn’t test well?

FATHER and MOTHER. Why, yes!

WENDY. Along came ProTest, Incorporated, guaranteed to...

PROTest SALESMAN. Lower anxiety and raise those test scores, or your money doubled.

FATHER and MOTHER. Let’s try it!

WENDY. In eighth grade, then, I became a ProTest client. I met with several Test Coaches, all with various approaches for improving my test-taking abilities.

TEST COACH 1. Well, Wendy, this first step might be difficult...it may take a long, long time for us to get there, but it is necessary. First, we must identify your problem. We won’t be able to make any significant progress, Wendy, until you are willing to freely admit the difficulty you are having. Now, I know this may not be easy, but I have a series of steps I want you to follow...

STUNT WENDY. I do not test well.

TEST COACH 1. What, Dear?

STUNT WENDY. My name is Wendy and I do not test well.

TEST COACH 1. Oh. Well. Good. Good for you. I wasn’t really expecting that, this early. Most people take a bit longer to get to this stage. I’m not entirely ready to move on quite...that is, I don’t have everything with me at this point to...

STUNT WENDY. I do not test well.

TEST COACH 1. I heard you! Good. Just...sit down and let me re-group, why don’t you? (Flipping through a manual) Step two, step two. What do I do with them after they’ve admitted the problem?

(TEST COACH 2 enters like a drill sergeant; TEST COACH 1 sits back down to resume the test.)

TEST COACH 2. All right, then, Wendy, is it?

STUNT WENDY. Yes. My name is Wendy and I do not...

TEST COACH 2. I don’t particularly care what you do and don’t do, Miss Wendy! My major point is, you look flabby to me!

STUNT WENDY. Flabby?

TEST COACH 2. That’s right, Sister. The mind and the body are connected. Flabby body means flabby mind. You got me?

STUNT WENDY. Flabby means flabby, yes.
TEST COACH 2. Drop down and give me twenty push-ups. One, two, three, four, five.

(STUNT WENDY collapses.)

Is that all you've got? No wonder you're having troubles. Sigh! history tab. Now, flip on your back and give me fifty sit-ups. One, two, three, four, five... come on, don't slack on me! Eight, nine, ten... By the time I'm done with you, your body is going to be firm; your mind is going to be alert. Pop up here and give me 65 jumping jacks. One, two, three...

STUNT WENDY. I can't do this! I'm dying!

TEST COACH 2. Dying? You don't know dying! I'll show you dying, there, Missy! You're not leaving here 'til I get ninety push-ups, five hundred fifty sit-ups...

MESSENGER. Coach?

TEST COACH 2. What is it?

MESSENGER. The Olympic Synchronized Underwater Basket-weaving Team needs conditioning work.

TEST COACH 2. I'm outta here, kid—the OSUB needs me.

STUNT WENDY. (Exhausted:) That's good. Go to them. I'll be fine.

(He goes back to his test. TEST COACH 3 comes to WENDY.)

TEST COACH 3. I believe in identifying and using our emotions so that the very elements that keep us from our highest potential can actually be turned into achievement fuel.

STUNT WENDY. Achievement fuel.

TEST COACH 3. That's right—achievement fuel: high octane to rev up your test-taking skills so you can go from zero to one hundred in less than a month!

STUNT WENDY. I believe you just over-extended a metaphor.

TEST COACH 3. Huh?

STUNT WENDY. Carry on. High octane.

TEST COACH 3. Right. The key is to identify and use those emotions. Identify and use. Say you're angry. Show me anger.

STUNT WENDY. (Half-hearted:) Gr.

TEST COACH 3. Right! Now, we take that anger and we use it to beat the test. You darned test! I'm angry at you! I'm going to beat you! Every right answer is like a punch! Every good essay is a solid kick! Get it? Now, show me sadness.

STUNT WENDY. Wa.

TEST COACH 3. Yeah! We take that sadness and we use it to comfort the test. Oh, Test, I'm going to help you feel better by getting your answers right. As we take the test, we make it feel better. We hug it. We give it Kleenex. We dry its tears.

WENDY. This particular train of thought got me wondering where one would find the nose on an algebra test.

TEST COACH 3. So, let's practice. Identify the emotion and use it. What are you feeling right now? Anger?

STUNT WENDY. No.

TEST COACH 3. Sadness.

STUNT WENDY. Nyet.

TEST COACH 3. Pity? Pity is a great tool.

STUNT WENDY. Nein.

TEST COACH 3. Disgust?

STUNT WENDY. Non.


STUNT WENDY. None of the aforementioned.

TEST COACH 3. All right, then: what one word would you use to describe your emotional state right now?

(Pause.)

STUNT WENDY. Oblivion.
PREACHER. Here lies Wendy Fordman. She was a genius, but she just didn’t test well. What can we say about Wendy? She couldn’t do fifty push-ups, but she was darned smart anyway. Wendy, Wendy, Wendy. (With finality:) She knew it until you asked her.

WENDY. So here I am again. Taking a test. Sitting, today, between Sarah and Bob. They both test relatively well. They pass—Sarah with A’s, Bob with D’s. Their strategies differ, of course.

SARAH. (As she works:) Okay, okay, let’s see. “Which word makes most sense in the blank: ‘The ______ of the poem encourages multiple readings.’

A. pejoration
B. mammon
C. rhetoric
D. ambiguity


BOB. Oh, the essays. I hate essays. “Which of the above poems is better? Justify your answer.” Which of the above poems... (Looking from one poem to the other) Uh-huh, uh-huh. (Writing:) Poem A is better because it is shorter. Okay, question 2...

WENDY. Sarah intends to be valedictorian and attend Dartmouth. Bob intends to drive large trucks and drink heavily. Given their aspirations, they both will succeed because, among other things, they test well. I, on the other hand...

EINSTEIN. Imagination is more important than knowledge.

WENDY. Thank-you, Albert. You know that quote, with the picture of Einstein and his crazy hair flying out like he’s being electrified? I think it’s standard issue for guidance offices. You know the guidance office poster sayings:

TEACHER. (Picking up WENDY’s test, looking through it:) You didn’t answer half of the multiple choice questions.

WENDY. (To audience:) I got caught up thinking how much the capital letter D resembles my great-uncle Herbert.

TEACHER. Only one of the essays done?

WENDY. (To audience:) And that is a rambling discourse about how poetry may have been accidentally invented by a schizophrenic king with an obsessive-compulsive need to rhyme.

TEACHER. And what is this? “My goshbustified uncle”? That word isn’t even in the word bank!

WENDY. (To audience:) Whoops.

TEACHER. Wendy, I know you don’t test well, but, honestly, what have you been doing all period?

WENDY. (To teacher) Honestly?

TEACHER. Yes. I would really like to know.

WENDY. Well, quite honestly, I’ve been narrating a play centered around the concept of my inability to take tests. All of the students in the room, and you, as well, were characters in the play. At one point, you played a game show host.

TEACHER. Really?

WENDY. You were quite good. You might want to consider a career change.

TEACHER. (Blink, blink) I think you’re right. Go home, Wendy.

WENDY. Thank-you. I will. I just have a final word for the audience.

(The TEACHER exits, shaking her head.)

Poor woman. I give her fits. All right, then, appropriately enough, we are going to end with a test. One question: What has this all been about?

(Long pause.)
THE GREEK MYTHOLOGY OLYMPIAGANZA  
(ONE-ACT)

by Don Zolidis

(The set may truly be anything. Greek pillars. A school. A bare stage. Perhaps a complete Dionysian temple with roasting spits of pigs if you have that kind of budget. If you don’t, perhaps toy pigs.) 
(A spotlight circles crazily around the dark stage. Loud drumming. Perhaps a sports theme song. Something like “Get Ready for This” by 2 Unlimited.)

NARRATOR 2. (Off-stage, on a microphone, booming like a boxing announcer) ARRRRE YOU READY TO LEARN ABOUT GREEK MYTHOLOGYEEE!?!?

(Explosions. Flames. High-energy pulsating music and colored lights. Everything you would see before going to a professional basketball game.)

(The lights come up. NARRATOR 1 and NARRATOR 2, wearing togas over their clothes, explode onto the stage.)

NARRATOR 2. Welcome to the Greek Mythology Olympiaganza!

NARRATOR 1. Hold onto your seats because in the next thirty minutes you are going to be taken on a journey—

NARRATOR 2. (Providing an echo effect) Journey Journey Journey journey—

NARRATOR 1. Into the mind of the ancient Greek.

NARRATOR 2. Thrills! Cyractions! Aggravations! Exhortations! Other things! I’m talking about sons killing fathers who killed their fathers who had some other kids that are like gigantic monsters with twenty-five thousand heads and they’re all poisonous and eating all kinds of stuff and it’s awesome!

NARRATOR 1. My name is [Actor’s real name] and I will be your captain

NARRATOR 2. Captain captain captain

NARRATOR 1. This evening

NARRATOR 2. evening evening evening

NARRATOR 1. And I will be guiding you into the murky depths of Greek mythology and bringing you back out again on the other side—

NARRATOR 2. And my name is [Actor’s real name] and I am the pied piper of cool, the lieutenant Spock to your Captain Kirk, the father of the fable, the legend of legends, and front man of this band of merry misfits!

NARRATOR 1. Joining us on-stage—

NARRATOR 2. The dream team!

(The Actors emerge, in various states of preparedness. Some are pushed on. Some don’t want to be here. Some are doing calisthenics. Some appear as if they had been announced at a basketball game.)

Trained by Stanislavski, Stella Adler, and a homeless guy named Bernie, they represent the peak of thespianical achievement!

(To the Actors)

All right, get off the stage.

(The Actors leave, irate.)

NARRATOR 1. Let’s calm it down for a moment, shall we? When you think about the Greeks, what do you think about?

(She looks for answers in the audience.)

Anyone? Anyone?

(NARRATOR 2 raises his hand.)

NARRATOR 2. Ooh. Me.

NARRATOR 1. What?

NARRATOR 2. That hairy guy who owns a restaurant.

NARRATOR 1. While it’s true that many Greeks are hirsute and do own restaurants—


NARRATOR 1. You’ll be surprised to know that they started Western culture. In fact, if it weren’t for the Greeks we’d just be a bunch of naked illiterate savages painting ourselves blue and eating raw deer—

NARRATOR 2. That sounds awesome.

NARRATOR 1. And as punishment for their contribution to Western culture, we’ve been forced to study them for the past two thousand five hundred years.
NARRATOR 2. What's wrong with Uranus?
URANUS. That's it! I quit. I said I wasn't going to be Uranus.
(Uranus throws down his crown and is about to leave.)
NARRATOR 2. All right fine. Let's call you the big U.
URANUS. Okay then.
CRONOS. Thank you Rhea. Now, I had a dream the other night that
my children will one day rise up and kill us all. Thoughts?
(The Titans aren't sure what to do.)
URANUS. Okay, how about this: After each child is born, you eat
them.
(Cronos considers it.)
CRONOS. That sounds logical.
RHEA. You want to eat my babies?
CRONOS. This is why women can't be in charge of anything. They
can't make the tough decisions. Eating babies it is. Nice idea, Big U.
URANUS. Thanks, your majesty.
NARRATOR 2. Now I know what you're thinking out there: I'm not
sure this is the proper family relationship. But you're just looking at
it with modern eyes, in ancient times it was perfectly acceptable to...
okay, it was always gross.
(Uranus exits.)
RHEA. Cronos, can we talk?
CRONOS. Sure honey, what's up?
RHEA. This is hard for me to say: I'd like you to stop eating our
children.
CRONOS. Nag nag nag nag nag nag, that's all you ever do!
NARRATOR 2. So Rhea did the only thing she could do—they went
to therapy.

(A therapist enters and they sit.)
THERAPIST. That's interesting. And how do you feel about him
eating the children?
RHEA. It makes me feel...upset.
THERAPIST. Go on.
RHEA. Cause he's a jerk—

The Greek Mythology Olympiaganza

THERAPIST. That's a blaming statement. We're not using blaming
statements here.
CRONOS. I feel upset now.
THERAPIST. It's okay, Cronos. It's Rhea's turn to share right now.
Are you listening to her?
CRONOS. Yes.
THERAPIST. Good. I think we're making progress. Go on Rhea.
Tell Cronos how you feel.
RHEA. Cronos, when you eat my babies it makes me...
THERAPIST. If you don't share your feelings with him, he'll never
know.
RHEA. It makes me feel angry because a lot of work went into those
babies and you eating them...
THERAPIST. Keep going! We're getting somewhere now.
RHEA. Means that you're eating our love.
CRONOS. Can I respond to that?
THERAPIST. Please. That's why we're here.
CRONOS. Rhea—
THERAPIST. Yes. Look at her.
CRONOS. You need to stop complaining or I'll eat you next.
THERAPIST. No no we're backsliding, remember what we talked
about in our last session—
CRONOS. Oh sure and you've never done anything wrong in this
marriage! What about that time when the soup was cold?
THERAPIST. Maybe—
CRONOS. You're not even trying to make this marriage work!
RHEA. Are you kidding me?!
THERAPIST. (Overlapping) Let's try to remain positive—
CRONOS. Where is the love?! Huh? Where is the affection!!!
THERAPIST. Okay. Okay. Stop. Let's just sit down and try to move
forward. We're going to try an exercise I like to call 'sharing time.'
So here's what we do: Cronos, you share something you haven't told
Rhea, and then Rhea, you share something you haven't told Cronos.
Okay? Can we try that?
CRONOS. I guess.
Oh where oh where can Eurydice be? 
She's left living society 
She's gone to Hades so I got to be cool 
So I can see my baby when I leave...this world.

It was a bright afternoon on our wedding day 
She was beautiful in every way 
She was bit in the heel 
She didn't even feel 
I lost my love, my life that way

Oh where oh where can Eurydice be? 
Apollo took her away from me 
She's gone to Hades so I got to go down
To see my baby girl in darkness town.

NARRATOR 1. And the song he sang was so beautiful and so sad 
that all of Hades stopped for a second. Everything fell in love with 
him right there. The stones. The rocks. Everything.

(HADES enters.)

HADES. Hey kid. That's some sound you got there.

ORPHEUS. Who are you?

HADES. I'm your Uncle Hades. Sheesh. Look I wanna sign you to 
a record deal, you got it? We're gonna go triple platinum with that 
thing. I've got this kid down here named Elvis, he's nothing com-
pared to you. I'm talking number one on every chart.

ORPHEUS. I just want my girlfriend back.

HADES. That's sweet, that's sweet. Young love. We're gonna make a 
killing off that. Nobody leaves the underworld though.

ORPHEUS. Then I'm not doing the record deal.

HADES. Ah come on kid. Tell you what? I want to introduce you to 
some of your fans down here.

(FURIES enter.)

These are the Furies.

FURIES. OMG there he is! There he is!

(They scream.)

I love you! 
I love you more! 
I love you so much! 
I want to just tear you apart I love you so much!

HADES. Girls, girls. Chill out.

FURIES. Marry me! 
No marry me! 
Forget about her, marry me!

HADES. Tell you what. You're a sweet kid, I'm gonna make you a 
deal. I'm gonna let Eurydice go back up to the world of the living. I 
don't do that for just anybody. But you got a great sound and we're 
gonna be rich. So here's the deal: She's gonna walk right behind you. 
If you can walk out of here without looking at her, you both live. If 
you look back at her though, I get to keep her forever, and I'm gonna 
give you over to your fans there.

FURIES. We love you! 
We're going to eat you! 
But we still love you! 
Call us!

ORPHEUS. All right.

HADES. Turn around.

(ORPHEUS turns around.)

Hey sweetcheeks, get your tuckus out here!

(EURYDICE enters, wearing black.)

All right now you two crazy kids get out of here.

(They start walking.)

ORPHEUS. So what have you been up to?

EURYDICE. There's a lot of daytime TV down here, actually. It's 
kind of horrible.

ORPHEUS. That doesn't sound too bad.

EURYDICE. Thanks for coming and getting me.

ORPHEUS. No problem.

(They walk around in a little circle. EURYDICE trips.)

EURYDICE. Whoops.

ORPHEUS. You okay?

(He looks back at her.)

EURYDICE. Nooooooo!

NARRATOR 1. And Eurydice was torn from his grasp.

ORPHEUS. Aaaaaaaaaah!