

SON OF APOLLO

a ten-minute play

by

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SYNOPSIS

Phaethon desperately wants to prove he is not only Apollo's child, but Apollo's son. His mother Clymene fears Phaethon enlists harmful affectations to prove his identity to others.

CHARACTERS

CLYMENE:

A mother

PHAETHON:

A son, early 20s or younger - to be played by a trans man or trans-masc actor only

CLYMENE sits at a table next to a radio which loudly plays "Ain't No Sunshine." CLYMENE does not seem to particularly enjoy it. PHAETHON stands nearby and stares at CLYMENE. CLYMENE turns to stare back. This continues for a long, long time.

It's awkward.

That's okay.

Finally:

PHAETHON

They don't believe me.

CLYMENE

What?

PHAETHON

They don't believe me.

CLYMENE

About what?

PHAETHON

Either... any
thing.

They don't believe he's my father.

...They don't believe I'm his son.

Pause.

PHAETHON

I hate them.

CLYMENE

What?

PHAETHON

I mean.

Well.

They're just... ugh!

CLYMENE
Who cares what they think?

PHAETHON
Yeah!
But.
No,
it's not that/simple

CLYMENE
Simple. I know I know,
it's not how being human works.

PHAETHON turns the radio down.

PHAETHON
Tell me about my father.

*CLYMENE turns it back up.
PHAETHON turns it down.*

PHAETHON
Tell me about my father
please.

CLYMENE
Fay-

PHAETHON
PhaeTHON, Mom

CLYMENE
-thon, you gotta let me finish,
how can I do things right if you
don't give me a chance to finish.

CLYMENE stares hard at PHAETHON for a moment.

PHAETHON
I'm sorry I interrupted you.
Please, Mom.
Tell me about him.

CLYMENE

What's with the sudden obsession with him?

Pause.

A moment of recognition.

CLYMENE

Your father.

Your father...lights the skies,

he chases away the night,

he lives at the very top of the world.

Those brats can't look at your father without suffering retinal damage.

PHAETHON

He sounds so cool.

CLYMENE

He's pretty cool.

PHAETHON

Do you miss him?

CLYMENE

Sometimes.

Not particularly.

In the way I miss my own father.

It's easier to love someone like that from a distance.

PHAETHON

Is he really my

CLYMENE

Yes.

Pause.

CLYMENE

Hell, if you don't believe me

go ask him

he'll tell you the same.

PHAETHON

I believe you,
sorry,
I believe you...
Do I remind you of him?

CLYMENE

Sure, sometimes.

PHAETHON

Am I... much like him?

CLYMENE

You aren't much like anyone but yourself.

PHAETHON

Seriously

CLYMENE

Why're you badgering me about it?

*CLYMENE turns the radio back up....
and then turns it back down to say:*

CLYMENE

You worry about what they think too much.

She turns it back up.

PHAETHON

You know that's not it
you know that's not all it is
It's not so simple
it's not that easy

CLYMENE

Nothing is

PHAETHON

It's not fair

CLYMENE

The world isn't fair

PHAETHON

So? It should be!

I want them to know it's true,
to recognize me

I wish I was more like him

I wish I could drive his chariot across the sky
striking with the fervor available to me,

I would convince them of the truth
of my existence by scorching them with it.

CLYMENE turns down the radio.

CLYMENE

That's not you.

PHAETHON

What do you know about who I am?

CLYMENE

I've been here
every day

PHAETHON

What do you know about who I am now?

CLYMENE

I know every hair on your head
every gesture at every circumstance
what have you needed to learn
that I haven't taught you
What...
do you think you need a father figure now?
He can't legitimize you any more than I can!

PHAETHON

He can!
And and
I'm going to see him!
He could teach me his path -
My proof would be the sizzling of their skin
as I blaze overhead.

CLYMENE

This vindictiveness, this toxin
these rage-filled desires will
burn you alive. These are not
the things that will make you a man!

PHAETHON

You told me to go!
You said to ask him!

CLYMENE

Isn't it better
maybe I don't know much
I know I don't know much
but isn't it better
to be who you are, who you really are?
You can embrace your joys and pleasures,
your kindnesses, and still be his...
These affectations...are they really you?

Long pause.

PHAETHON

I don't know!
...I don't know.
But... I have to see him.
I have to try.

Pause. CLYMENE closes her eyes.

CLYMENE

When I see you
I see you running -
your feet slapping against the pavement,
too-big shoes slipping and tripping you,
your arms straight, elbows locked, hands pointed out and down,
two sides of a triangle trying to touch the earth. And your face tilted
straight up, staring directly into the sun.
I'm scared this will destroy you, Phaethon.

PHAETHON

I love you, Mom.

I'm sorry... I'm... just sorry.

CLYMENE

It feels like I'm losing you

I know that's

that's not fair... to you.

But it feels like you're pulling away from me because I'm your mother.

It all... it scares me.

PHAETHON

I know.

I'm sorry.

Pause.

CLYMENE

You're right, probably.

You should see him.

At least get your own...affirmation..

PHAETHON

Do you think he'll even see me?

Or listen?

CLYMENE

I think he will be proud to see you,

his child

his...Son

PHAETHON

How do you think he'll feel?

CLYMENE

I think you will love him.

You know...

you are what you say you are

that's how it works

there's no need for proof

you are you

no matter what they and your father and I think

PHAETHON

Can I know that and still need this?

There's a great divide between my thoughts and feelings

I need - I need this.

CLYMENE

Okay.

PHAETHON

I'm gonna head out now...

if that's okay?

CLYMENE

Okay.

PHAETHON

I'll be home soon.

CLYMENE

I'll be here.

PHAETHON kisses CLYMENE good-bye and exits. CLYMENE turns up the radio.