

Peleus

Will Owen

monologue poemplay

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Introductory Information

Concept & Synopsis: *Peleus* is a short, monologue poemplay that -- drawn from a passage in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* -- re-imagines Peleus' side of his conversation with Zeus (his grandfather), as Zeus pressures Peleus get after Thetis and make her pregnant. Zeus had been intent on adding Thetis to his long list of consorts, willing and coerced (including Peleus' mother). But Thetis' father, Proteus, the ever-changing god of the sea, foretells that Thetis will have a son who will surpass his father in fame and deeds -- and this prophesy so spooks Zeus that he leans on his grandson, Peleus, to take his place in Thetis' arms.

Cast Breakdown: An actor (Peleus).

CHARACTERS

PELEUS *the son of Aeacus, king of the Myrmidons, and of Aegina, an island nymph* (**PL**)

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Peleus

PELEUS interrupted in the middle of his day or evening, getting a phone call or textmessage/email etc.

Great. My own long-lost grandpop he pings me now.
So yeah, like after so long so 'way cool a surprise.
Like all this time you had like oh somehow
not the slightest time like even come tell some lies
'bout how much you really care, but aww... so 'way --
all day every day -- busy ruling your universe?
Yeah... Sure it's a good time, what can I say?
Oh you know, I'm alright -- here below -- could be worse.
So how's all there? All the fam'ly and the topgod biz?
So why don't you ask me how my mom's doing, huh my man?
"Don't remember?" Really? Or even want to? So it is.
Yeah so long...oh yeah "time heals" -- like it can?
No, I didn't think that's why I'm hearing from you now.
A favor? From me? You do? How 'bout that?
Thetis? Yeah, I know her. Not my crowd though.
They're all beautiful. For sure you know that
more than any being. Like button-licking beautiful.
Maybe. She's friends of friends -- and big trouble attitude rep.
And you been wanting to know her too, right? Fool!
Old quack duck that just won't learn. Paps, better watch your step.
So what, you're afraid? Afraid of what -- you,
with pow'r, who rule, hard as bolt-iron, both gods and men?
So old Seashape, he vows the child she'll spew
knit-up from her womb by life itself's relen-
tless fury'll prove stronger than even you --
muscle you out like you too paid death's due?
Yeah that'u'd be for sure an unwanted end
to all your clout'n'fame: ol' Changedaddy,
her father, taking down even you, olichieftain
of Olympus' dreamrealm of living immortally?
And you need me, deflect that deathbound destiny
from you? Okay, but like what's in it for me?
Yeah, listen you can skip the ragreg flattery --
all your "son of Aeacus, so honorable a king,
you, intrepid, who with the argonauts slipped free

the golden fleece from right beneath the sleeping
Medea-socerèd ever wakeful dragon's eyes..."
and returned in triumph with the glittering prize?
(To then, like Jason, shouldering the kingship cape,
so proud take up his throne, then spiral under ever-
changing fortune like hopeless for escape --
his children killed, all lost, and left in pover-
ty to die a wreck'dman on the beach asleep:
headsmash by the keelfall of his rotted, ship of glory?)
Uh-huh, right -- you'll see I'll get that truly lasting --
what most precious that makes of mortals almost gods --
true love, so strong, unendingly desiring
that in the children's sureness of security bodes
so well for their self-command -- my dad-glory
then reduced to prelude of their achievement story?
Oh yeah, for sure -- by the bye and on the way
I'll also get that good wife priceless treasure --
make me laugh -- whose joyful reign and sway --
happy fam'ly, marriage bed tireless pleasure:
and us both so serene, accomplished, honoring duty,
resplendent as humans one with greater beauty?
And if I'd rather be like you, gun-notching'em,
for other swagmen's envy, all the twerkgirls --
one after the other, serially collect and botching'em
(to sieze, dreamlike, another of this world's
symbol fleece and scepterbolts of envied power
to keep from waking to the briefness of our mortal hour?)
You would know -- your catalogo is questo:
Danaë, subdued to silence awed by gold
the simple, Hera-harridaned, cow-eyed Io,
Leda, so knock-out dumb, when you took hold
of hers she mistook a draggled bleary-eyed and old
fat duck for a princely swan, majestic to behold.
And your list goes on: Europa -- lucky they got
social health care there after you put on that
heifer suit with the dickhole in the crotch
and damn near crushed her under all that blubberfat --
and hapless Semele, glimpsing unaccountable impunity
mindmaddened burned away in humiliation's fury.
Me, defy and laugh at you, my own grandsire withal?
You might've thought more 'bout y'r own wife's honor
when you scored my mother -- her too! -- a squirming mammal

in the feather-wingbeat snarry of raptor eagle claws -- for
then your peckhag's anger may'n't've scorched his island kingdoms
down to ants...force my father beg you make the Myrmidons?
And now changing, ever-as-the-sea, Proteus --
deepest rival, lurk and biding in the seam-gaps
of your worldly, realm of material rule -- he taunts us
with this silly proph'sy that so saps
your mettle -- tizzy-anxious sends you --
at what the son she'd have by you, to you, would do?
So you want me to knock her up instead?
Get you one less worry y'r whole mistrust-
misjointed mirrorhouse, in hidden fortune's time ahead,
won't crack-up sliv'ring, to worthless dust?
More brutal enforced is your brookless sway,
more fragile it feels to you and all in ev'ry way.
Yeah look I got work to do now okay?
Uh-huh...that's where I'll find her, there?
By a crescent shore raked clean by waves array-
ed in shiftandleaved glissading veils that bare
the beach they lap and leave so smooth and neat
the sand, to virgin print her silver feet?
There, on Thess'ly's coast (my home, I missed
so bad from the Aeolian-swept Argo's pitching rail)
I'll find her so you say, and if she's kissed
and held the way you say then I'll not fail
to make her mine -- siezed, to take away,
for as long as I would keep her, forever or a day?
Right. And every night as the languishing
horses of the sun hie westward to set the sun --
the last light of the day extinguishing
the sparkle azure of the sea to brine dark dun,
naked, arced to her dolphin's back, she springs
lightbreaking from the sea, and all of Nature sings.
She lifts up, standing in shoreshallows, then she steps,
her footplashes frothfoam greaves about her knees,
until she runs -- catchbreath -- sandstride beauty suresteps!
all long the beach below the upland cypress trees
until, bent and dodging through the myrtle grove,
she wends the path that climbs the promontory-closing cove.
There, in the cleftstone, hidden above the waves,
the cave, sacred, there she makes her home --
and there I'll find her where alone she braves

the wearing solitude of living on her own?
So richly blessed, but her own company she keeps --
and there I'll find her as she sleeps?
You know what you got in mind it's not
like what my mom -- after what she got from you --
like'u'd be proud of me to do, is'n't?
Huh...ain't shees what make the rules -- nothing we can do.
Look, I'll get back to you in that respect.
I don't know...maybe not like you'd expect.
Like everybody, I got the one, I got the other.
Sort of like some motives when we choose to act
at bottom can't be both when one upstops the other.
So act-time come I'm stuck, showing me to me in fact.
Possess, to rapture all in thralling envy;
or be, grace-made free, and disinterested win
all's admiration -- maybe -- but so more likely,
live a loser, seen like some never-been.
That what I'm looking at, here like oscillated?
Take and own or woo and win? What makes us do one
or other? And what'i'd mom tell me? So ask who you imitated,
that you learned from, when you've acted like you've done.
By fear that shackles, mistake that for respect?
And rule? Or what? True...? Admired for its suspect
redeeming virtue? And respect it fearless, freely gives?
One lives in dead story? Other, act that lives?
Take in war-swept glory, or win in peace-hued bliss?
Whooo...got to get my mind off of this.
Still, why 'm I now thinking only, like crushed deep on Thetis?

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