

A CALIFORNIA SURFER IN CLEOPATRA'S COURT

By Patrick Dorn

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A CALIFORNIA SURFER IN CLEOPATRA'S COURT

A Full Length Comedy

By Patrick Dorn

SYNOPSIS: Cowabunga Dudes! Surf's up...in Ancient Egypt! Totally awesome teen surfer Brody Morgan is mysteriously transported from a California beach in the 1960s to 41 BC Ancient Egypt and Cleopatra's court. Brody introduces hilarious 20th century inventions like flip flops, Egyptian cotton sheets, and mummy-style sleeping bags to Cleopatra and her Roman boyfriend, Mark Antony. When Cleopatra's wicked adviser Pothinus and ambitious sister Arsinoe attempt a venomous coup, Brody saves Cleo and the Romans, then returns home in time to compete in a totally gnarly surfing competition and be crowned Boss Kahuna. Inspired by Mark Twain's classic time-travel tale, this action-packed, hilarious comedy boasts a flexible cast, silly but simple costumes and props, uproarious gags and jokes, and loads of slapstick humor. The play is a mash-up of the goofy "beach party" movies of the Sixties and a comical take on the Antony and Cleopatra story from ancient history. King Tut is rolling over in his sarcophagus—with laughter—and all because there's... "A California Surfer in Cleopatra's Court"!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(7-12 females, 5-9 males, 0-30 extras; doubling possible)

ON THE BEACH:

BRODY MORGAN (m)	A totally awesome yet humble surfer dude (<i>146 lines</i>)
STICK (m)	A mean, back-paddling surfer (may also play Gluteus) (<i>23 lines</i>)
DELORES (f)	A stuck up surfer girl (may also play Arsinoe) (<i>24 lines</i>)
FRANKIE (m)	Surfer dude (may also play Mark Antony) (<i>28 lines</i>)
ANNETTE (f)	Surfer girl (may also play Cleopatra) (<i>25 lines</i>)

DEE DEE (f).....	Surfer girl (may also play Ahaneith) (<i>18 lines</i>)
CANDY (f)	Surfer girl (may also play Herneith) (<i>19 lines</i>)
DITZY (f).....	A kooky girl with strange hair and manners (must also play Hathor) (<i>34 lines</i>)
TERRI (f).....	A shy surfer girl (must also play Neferteri) (<i>23 lines</i>)
DAVID (m)	A lifeguard (may also play Maximus) (<i>14 lines</i>)
PAM (f).....	Another lifeguard (may also play Merneith) (<i>13 lines</i>)
BEACHCOMBER (m)	A crusty, mean old bum (may also play Pothinus) (<i>6 lines</i>)
IN ANCIENT EGYPT:	
CLEOPATRA (f).....	Queen of Egypt (<i>91 lines</i>)
MARK ANTONY (m)	Roman general (<i>70 lines</i>)
MAXIMUS (m)	A polite Roman officer (<i>25 lines</i>)
GLUTEUS (m).....	A goofy Roman soldier (<i>30 lines</i>)
HATHOR (f)	Priestess with a cow-horned headdress (must also play DITZY) (<i>46 lines</i>)
POTHINUS (m).....	Scheming Grand Vizier (<i>82 lines</i>)
ARSINOE (f).....	Cleopatra's sister, a menace (<i>28 lines</i>)
NEFERTERI (f).....	Handmaid/bodyguard of Cleopatra (must also play Terri) (<i>24 lines</i>)
AHANEITH (f).....	Handmaid/bodyguard (<i>18 lines</i>)
MERNEITH (f).....	Handmaid/bodyguard (<i>22 lines</i>)
HERNEITH (f).....	Handmaid/bodyguard (<i>22 lines</i>)

SUGGESTED EXTRAS:

EXTRAS (m/f)..... Additional surfer dudes, surfer girls, Roman soldiers, Egyptian courtiers and handmaids, as desired. (*Non-Speaking*)

CAST NOTE: For a smaller cast, consider doubling some or all of the following roles, so each “California” character has an “Egyptian” counterpart:

The roles of Terri/Nefeteri and Ditzzy/Hathor should not be doubled.

Stick/Gluteus

Delores/Arsinoe

Frankie/Mark Antony

Annette/Cleopatra

Dee Dee/Ahaneith

Candy/Herneith

David/Maximus

Pam/Merneith

Beachcomber/Pothinus

DURATION: 90 minutes.

TIME: Summer in the 1960s, then 41 BC, then back again.

SETTING: Delta del Rey Beach, California, then Cleopatra's pavilion overlooking the Nile River in Alexandria, Egypt, then back again.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

SCENE 1: Delta Rey Beach, summer in the Sixties

SCENE 2: Time Travel sequence

SCENE 3: Cleopatra's Pavilion overlooking the Nile River in Egypt, 41 BC

INTERMISSION

ACT TWO

SCENE 1: Cleopatra's Pavilion, a few days later

SCENE 2: Time Travel sequence

SCENE 3: Delta Rey Beach, moments after ACT ONE, SCENE 1.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The “beach party” movies of the 1960s had an infectious spirit of exuberant innocence and playfulness. Encourage the actors to enter into that fun-loving sense of silliness where all is right with the world, and evil, goofy though it may be, always gets its comical comeuppance. The play's refreshing optimism and joy of life will wash over any improbabilities like the perfect wave. Once the characters of the carefree kids on summer break are established, imagine that they have all been mysteriously transported back with Brody to ancient Egypt. Though their language and dress may seem just a little bit strange, young people haven't changed all that much over the centuries.

SET

ACT ONE

SCENE 1: Delta Rey Beach and Snack Shack. The beach covers most of the stage, except for the “water” area and the Snack Shack. The area is an open space defined by folding beach chairs, towels, surfboards, etc. The Snack Shack could be a revolving wagon/platform depicting the King Tut Snack Shack exterior on one side, and Cleopatra's pavilion/throne room on the other. The Snack Shack has a cartoonish image of King Tut holding a falafel, and a serving window with the sign CLOSED. Additional images could include camels, palm trees, pyramids, sphinx, etc., and a menu featuring corn dogs, ice cream, soft drinks, etc. If a rotating platform is not possible, the Snack Shack can consist of two or three pairs of hinged flats that are free-standing and set up like a screen in front of Cleopatra's pavilion. The idea is to make a quick and relatively silent change from the Snack Shack to Cleopatra's Pavilion, then back again during the Time Travel Sequences.

SCENE 2: Time Travel Sequence. This is actually a scene change, where the Snack Shack becomes Cleopatra's Pavilion, Delta del Rey beach props are removed, and Egyptian props are brought on.

SCENE 3: Cleopatra's Pavilion. The shores of the Nile covers most of the stage area, except for the “water” area and Cleopatra's Pavilion. The other side of the Snack Shack revolving wagon has wide strips of gauzy fabric draped decorously across the back, Egyptian-style lamp stands, and two thrones on a raised platform. Cleopatra's throne is more regal than Mark Antony's, and may be covered by ancient Egyptian symbols. A small table with an Egyptian-style pitcher of milk and cup stands near the throne. Again, if a revolving platform is not practical, have all this pre-set behind the Snack Shack book flats, which are then removed for the quick change.

ACT TWO

SCENE 1: Cleopatra's Pavilion. Same as before, except a stool is added for BRODY.

SCENE 2: Time Travel Sequence. This is a set change transition sequence, during which all Egyptian props are removed, the Snack Shack is restored to its place concealing Cleopatra's Pavilion, and Delta del Rey beach props are returned to where they were at the end of ACT ONE, SCENE 1.

SCENE 3: Delta del Rey Beach. As it was at the end of ACT ONE, SCENE 1.

WATER AREA: One area of the stage represents both the ocean at Delta Del Rey beach and the Nile River in ancient Egypt. The area needs to be large enough for up to two actors with surfboards, and set apart from the main action, while being close to an exit. If possible, light it separately so emphasis can change back and forth between the “beach” area and the “water” area. The floor should be painted blue or covered with a blue tarp. A blue padded gymnastics mat would be almost too good to be true. If possible, there should be a backdrop with cardboard, canvas or fabric “waves” that can be raised or lowered by stage hands as the scene requires, to create a “wave” effect. Several layers of these “waves” can be staggered or stacked, to create a more exciting wave effect. This area is used for the surfing scenes in ACT ONE, SCENE 1, ACT ONE, SCENE 3, and ACT TWO, SCENE 3.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

SOUND: Surf guitar or Beach Boys-type music at opening; eerie time travel music during transitions from beach to Egypt and back again; Middle Eastern music when lights come up on Egypt; rumbling sound of earthquake, possibly followed by the sound of a volcanic eruption/explosion; sound of flood/tsunami; seagulls and ocean shore.

SFX: Lights flash during transitions to and from Egypt. Additional colored lights, swirling projections, etc. could add to the time travel effect. It would be helpful to light the “water” area separately from the rest of the stage, as focus shifts between the two areas frequently.

COSTUMES

NOTE ON BEACH WEAR FROM THE SIXTIES – Check out any of the readily available Frankie Avalon/Annette Funicello “beach party” movies for ideas. There’s a wide variety of outfits, including capris, shorts, modest one- and two-piece swim suits and bikinis, t-shirts, loud Hawaiian shirts, sunglasses, hats, rubber flip flops, sandals, deck shoes, sneakers, etc. If any of the boys go shirtless, be prepared to apply body makeup. Attire that is perfectly acceptable in gymnastics or swim meets might seem too risqué on stage. Let modesty be your guide. The play works better when there’s not much skin showing.

BRODY – surfer shorts, baggy Hawaiian-style shirt, sleeveless undershirt, perhaps a shell choker necklace, flip flops. He should look casual and relaxed, but stand out somewhat from the rest of the crowd, perhaps through color choices. Later, a tall, cylindrical and silly-looking Egyptian crown/hat.

SURFER DUDES – variations on t-shirts, muscle shirts, tank tops, Hawaiian shirts, surfer shorts which double as knee-length swim suits, braided leather bracelets, choker-style necklaces made of shells or beads, sunglasses, funny hats.

SURFER GIRLS – Various wraps and coverings over swim suits. In the Sixties, even bikinis covered a lot of skin. Floppy sun hats, tank tops, sleeveless blouses with collars, capris, sandals, sneakers, deck shoes, etc.

LIFEGUARDS – DAVID wears bright red, thigh-length swim trunks, tank top or windbreaker. PAM wears a matching red once-piece swimsuit with shorts, windbreaker or lifeguard t-shirt.

BEACHCOMBER – Basically a “beach bum.” He wears ragged clothes that he found on the beach and sleeps in. Almost like a “castaway.” He carries a ratty bag of items to recycle for cash. Scraggly hair, untamed beard, etc.

DITZY/HATHOR – A muumuu is a floral-printed, loose-fitting, short-sleeved dress popular in Hawaii. Typically they are “pull over” type dresses, but since DITZY makes her costume change magically onstage, it should be “breakaway”, i.e. split down the back, and fastened closed with just a little Velcro. A STAGE HAND can pull the dress away as she spins, revealing the HATHOR costume underneath. She wears the same lace up sandals as both DITZY and HATHOR. Her hair is odd and out of place and time, perhaps suggesting cow horns, but definitely comical. It could be a beehive shape as DITZY that matches HATHOR's tall, horned headdress. As HATHOR, she is an Egyptian priestess. A belted, calf or ankle-length tunic with designs on the trim, and an elaborate and tall cow-horned headdress. Both outfits require pockets to hold white confetti.

NOTE ON QUICK CHANGES – Nearly everyone has a fairly quick change from Sixties beach wear to Egyptian costumes and back again, especially if actors are doubling roles (recommended). Make sure the costume choices are easily changed, and consider having screened “dressing areas” immediately offstage. Stage hands can “lay out” the costumes in advance, have them ready for the actors, and assist as needed, particularly with the “armor”.

NOTE ON EGYPTIAN/ROMAN COSTUMES – Do a web search on Ancient Egyptian clothing or costumes, also ancient Roman, for ideas. Most are variations on a simple t-shaped tunic, short sleeved or sleeveless, belted at the waist, and thigh, calf or ankle length. Then add trim and designs along the edges for variety. Extra long cotton t-shirts work well.

MAXIMUS and GLUTEUS – Roman-style helmets, plastic or cardboard breastplates, thigh-length, short sleeve tunics, shin guards, sandals, belt with plastic swords. Later “stealth armor” accessories which can be cardboard painted with “crocodile skin” pattern, crocodile masks (cardboard).

MARK ANTONY – Similar Roman-style garb as the soldiers, but without the helmet, and with a red cape and brighter armor. Later, a cloth hat, loud Hawaiian shirt, Bermuda shorts, flip flops, thick white makeup on nose.

CLEOPATRA – Classic ancient Egyptian white tunic decorated with bling and jewels on trim, belted at the waist, a circlet crown or the classic snake-head tiara, bracelets, sandals that lace up the shins. Later, fashionable Sixties style beach wear blouse, capris, large purse with stuffed cat sticking out, big sunglasses, and floppy hat. Black wig with bangs would be nice.

POTHINUS – Classic ancient Egyptian tunic, belted at the waist, sandals, an elaborate sphinx-style pharaoh-like headpiece, tie-on false cylindrical beard, a large chain with medallion or ankh.

ARSINOE and HANDMAIDS – Very similar to CLEOPATRA'S Egyptian garb, but not as ornate. HANDMAIDS need to be able to move like athletes in their outfits. Sleeveless, knee-length belted tunics, very little jewelry, possibly barefoot or simple flat sandals. If you can afford it, matching black wigs cut in Egyptian style with bangs would be hilarious. Later, HANDMAIDS wear Sixties-style beachwear similar to their California counterparts, except with Egyptian designs and embellishments. Since they do their Nile Style routine in these clothes, they must also be appropriate and comfortable for martial arts movement.

PROPS

- Ratty bag (BEACHCOMBER)
- Lifeguard flotation/rescue devices (DAVID, PAM)
- Carton of milk, clipboard, pencil (DITZY)
- Handkerchief (MAXIMUS, POTHINUS)
- Trumpet-like fanfare horn [could be cut-out] (AHANEITH)
- Giant [cut-out] fan on a broomstick (NEFERTERI)
- Net, pool noodle, broomstick-like poles with loops on the end (HANDMAIDS)

- SURFBOARDS – Longboards in the 1960s were eight to twelve feet in length, and approximately 20 inches wide. For this show, eight feet is long enough to look “retro.” Carve three-inch-thick Styrofoam insulation (They come in four foot by eight foot sheets) into surfboard shapes, then cover with canvas or even duct tape for strength and durability. Paint them as appropriate to their owner’s character. Have at least two, one for BRODY and one for STICK, plus at least one backup board in case of damage or breakage. Or use actual short surfboards, wave riders, etc. There should be no fins on the surfboards so they will lie flat.
- THE BEACH – Plastic or metal trash can, filled high enough with empty boxes so that the snake basket is clearly visible when placed on top. Cans or bottles inside for BEACHCOMBER to retrieve. Beach chairs, beach ball, towels, paperback books, picnic items, other beach-type decor. Nothing breakable.
- Pitcher of milk – should look ancient Egyptian, be unbreakable, and contain white confetti or watered down milk. The goblet HATHOR gives to BRODY should also be unbreakable but look ancient and pre-loaded with white confetti or watered down milk. If using liquid, one or more of the HANDMAIDS can mop up the spills with a cloth, or do so immediately during intermission.
- Stinger dinger – a tiny cardboard or foam board mini-hatchet, about the size of a doctor’s reflex hammer. Arrives on a platter with a lid. Also a musical triangle and beater.
- Erasable papyrus – butcher paper or baking parchment, stylus or pencil-type stick (BRODY)
- Mummy-style sleeping bag, construction paper or cardboard sarcophagus mask (POTHINUS)
- Backpack containing harmonica in a plastic sandwich bag, spray can of “shark repellent,” notebook labeled “Awesomely epic waves I wish I could have ridden,” suntan lotion, flip flops. (BRODY)
- Wicker basket with a lid, containing numerous and varied rubber snakes or lengths of rope painted to look like snakes. (POTHINUS)
- Large fans on broomstick type poles, also broomstick like poles with soft cotton ribbon or rope loops on one end. These loops go around BRODY’S body, so make sure they are secure, but not TOO secure so the actor won’t be injured. (HANDMAIDS)

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT RISE: *an open area at Delta del Mar Beach. UP LEFT is the weather-beaten exterior of the King Tut Snack Shack, complete with garish and cheesy Egyptian-style designs and a menu featuring falafels, corn dogs, pizza, ice cream, soft drinks, etc. Folding beach chairs, beach towels, prop surfboards, etc., are spread out across the stage. A trash can is UP STAGE. Set apart from the main playing area, either on the apron or on a raised platform DOWN RIGHT or elsewhere on or near the STAGE, is an area representing the ocean, and later, the Nile River. This playing area is painted blue and may have a simple backdrop depicting cresting, curling and/or crashing waves. SEE PRODUCTION NOTES. MUSIC: Surf Guitar music from the 1960's. LIGHTS UP: DELORES, DEE DEE, CANDY and TERRI are ON STAGE, relaxing, tossing a beach ball, reading, putting on suntan lotion, etc. BEACHCOMBER ENTERS and wanders about aimlessly, stooping now and then to pick up items and toss them back. He digs through the trash can, extracts a bottle or can and puts it in a ratty bag. DAVID and PAM, in lifeguard attire and carrying floatation/rescue devices, patrol the beach. FRANKIE and ANNETTE are seated on folding beach chairs UP LEFT near the Snack Shack. DITZY, wearing a Hawaiian muumuu, sipping from a milk carton and holding a clipboard, stands beside them. MUSIC OUT.*

BEACHCOMBER: *(Stops foraging through the trash can, shouts.)*

Hey, you kids! Get off of my lawn! *(They ignore him. He resumes, grumbling.)* The world just ain't the way it used to be.

DITZY: *(Sets down carton of milk, wipes off "milk" mustache. To FRANKIE and ANNETTE.)* It's time sir, ma'am.

ANNETTE: Where are all the surfers?

DITZY: Only two champions remain in the competition.

ANNETTE: That's it?

FRANKIE: Well, we ARE getting close to the end of the contest.

DITZY: Many of them had to drop out after that unfortunate incident with the swarm of jellyfish.

ANNETTE: Are they all right?

DITZY: Sure. (*Refers to DAVID and PAM, who wave back.*) The lifeguards pulled out the stingers and treated them with vinegar and baking soda. The pain will fade after 24 hours. But for some reason, the other surfers are refusing to go back in the water.

FRANKIE: I don't blame them. Jellyfish can totally wipe out a day of surfing. Glad it wasn't a shark.

EVERYONE startles, stops what they're doing and looks at FRANKIE, alarmed.

CANDY: Shark?

FRANKIE: No, no shark.

DEE DEE: False alarm, everybody.

THEY go back to what they were doing.

ANNETTE: You know you're not allowed to say that word. Saying the "S" word on a beach is like yelling "fire" in a theater.

FRANKIE: Sorry. But whether it's a jellyfish or a... (*Mouths the word "shark"*), it sure took a big bite out of our surfing competition.

ANNETTE: So who do we have left?

DITZY: (*Consults clipboard.*) Brody and Stick.

FRANKIE: That's it?

DITZY: (*Checks clipboard, looks up.*) Affirmative.

ANNETTE: I hope Brody wins.

FRANKIE: Hey, don't make me jealous.

ANNETTE: Oh, grow up, Frankie.

DITZY: There IS something special about that young man.

FRANKIE: And something wrong with that other guy.

ANNETTE: Stick is a wave hogging, back-paddling bully.

DITZY: Brody has the soul of a true surfer. (*ANNETTE and DITZY sigh.*)

FRANKIE: (*Stands.*) Okay, that's enough. Let's get started with round two before the tide changes.

ANNETTE: (*Stands. Announces.*) All right, surfer dudes and dudettes – are you ready to see some awesome wave riding?

OTHERS stop what they are doing, gather DOWN STAGE.

DELORES: It's about time.

DEE DEE: We want to see who the winner will be.

TERRI: I hope its Brody. He's so dreamy. (*Sighs.*)

CANDY: He sure is. And boy, can he ride a wave.

DELORES: Brody's not so hot. Stick is way stronger.

FRANKIE: We'll see soon enough who will be crowned Boss Kahuna of Delta del Rey Beach. This year anyway. If you recall, I was the winner last year.

ANNETTE: Of course we remember. You remind us every chance you get. (*OTHERS laugh.*)

DITZY: It's time to see if something fresh and new can be brought to the sport of surf riding.

CANDY: (*To DELORES.*) Other than brute strength.

DELORES: Stick will win. Brody is a wipe out waiting to happen.

DITZY: The time of high tide has arrived.

FRANKIE: Surf's up!

ANNETTE: (*Announces.*) Challengers, to the shore.

BRODY and STICK ENTER from behind the Snack Shack, carrying their surfboards. BRODY also has a back pack. STICK looks larger, stronger and more aggressive. BRODY appears relaxed and cheerful. STICK marches DOWN STAGE, scowling. BRODY smiles and waves.

BRODY: Hey dudettes.

CANDY, DEE DEE, DELORES, TERRI: Hey, Brody.

DELORES saunters up to STICK.

DELORES: Hey, Stick.

STICK: Hey, Delores.

DELORES: (*Moves close to STICK.*) What are you going to do to this loser, Stick?

STICK: I'm going to "stick" it to him. (*He laughs. OTHERS don't.*)

DEE DEE: What's she got against Brody?

CANDY: Oh, Delores tried to get him to like her, and he wasn't interested.

DITZY: No fury like a woman scorned.

TERRI: Who can blame her? We ALL like Brody, don't we? (*GIRLS agree, sigh in unison.*)

CANDY: Too bad he only has eyes for his surfboard.

DEE DEE: And the waves.

ANNETTE: All right everybody. We're now in round two of the Delta del Rey surfing competition.

FRANKIE: The theme this time is power and technique. We'll be looking at the pop up and stance...

ANNETTE: Both regular or "goofy foot" are permitted, but keep your feet close together, backs straight and head high if you want to win.

FRANKIE: You'll earn points for how cleanly you approach and catch the wave, and how long you ride it.

ANNETTE: You'll lose points for shifting your weight or flailing your arms. Avoid unnecessary turns that can throw your balance off.

FRANKIE: This round isn't about looking pretty, it's about being strong and steady, start to finish.

DITZY: The third and final stage of the competition will be freestyle. That's where you can show off your signature moves. After all the points are tallied, we shall crown the Boss Kahuna of Delta del Rey Beach.

FRANKIE: Okay. Surfers, are you ready?

BRODY: (*Shrugs back pack off, drops it.*) Totally, my man.

STICK: I was BORN ready! (*Knocks BRODY's board.*) Try to keep up, pipsqueak. (*OTHERS react.*)

BRODY: Not cool, man.

STICK: (*Approaches BRODY.*) You want to make something of it? Why don't you go back to Zuma Beach with the other wannabes?

DELORES: You tell him, Stick.

BRODY: Hey, chill out, dude.

STICK: Don't tell me what to do, poser.

STICK shoves BRODY or his board, causing BRODY to stumble into TERRI, who catches him.

TERRI: Are you okay?

BRODY: I'm good. Thanks for the assist, dudette.

TERRI: Any time...dude.

TERRI smiles at him. BRODY doesn't notice because he's checking his surfboard for damage. DAVID and PAM stand between STICK and BRODY.

DAVID: No fighting on the beach or you're BOTH going to be banned from the sand.

PAM: If you two guys have a problem, work it out on the waves.

CANDY: Brody didn't do anything.

DEE DEE: If you're going to ban someone, ban Stick. He started it.

DELORES: You'd like that, wouldn't you?

TERRI: We ALL would. Stick is a bully.

DITZY: Sometimes exile is not enough. An example must be made.

FRANKIE: Ditzzy's right. *(To DITZY.)* What do you mean?

DITZY: Merely that the true champion will be revealed by the nobility of his character. *(Whenever DITZY says something like this, OTHERS react with momentary confusion, then shake it off. The same will be true later, when she becomes HATHOR.)*

ANNETTE: All right then. Round two of the Delta del Rey Surfboard Competition Power and Technique. Surfers ready?

STICK: Like I said before...

DELORES: He was BORN ready.

BRODY: Anytime, all the time.

FRANKIE: Okay then. *(Shouts.)* Surf's up!

ALL: Surf's up!

STICK runs with his board either OFF STAGE or directly to the area of the STAGE designated for surfing scenes. BRODY is right behind him. They act out or mime the actions as described.

BRODY: Cowabunga!

OTHERS spread out across DOWN STAGE, looking out over the audience, as if watching the surfers.

DAVID: Stick got to the water first. He's a strong paddler. Upper body strength is a huge advantage at this point.

PAM: Both are approaching the breaks at a perpendicular angle, keeping the surfboard's nose up two or three inches.

DEE DEE: Brody's gaining on Stick.

CANDY: He's so quick and agile.

TERRI: He glides through the water like a dolphin. *(Sighs. BEACHCOMBER watches.)*

BEACHCOMBER: *(Shouts at BRODY and STICK.)* Hey, you kids. Get out of my bathtub!

BEACHCOMBER mutters to himself, wanders over to FRANKIE and ANNETTE's beach chairs.

FRANKIE: Here comes the wave break. Let's see how they take the full force of a wave crashing over them.

DAVID: Stick chooses a duck dive, forcing the nose of the board down and letting the wave roll right over him.

PAM: Brody executes a perfect turtle roll, flipping under the board as the wave broke, then rolling right back up on top.

DITZY: He lost some forward momentum with that move, but avoided a thrashing.

BEACHCOMBER picks up DITZY'S carton of milk, shakes it, drinks.

DELORES: Oh, he'll still get thrashed, if Stick has anything to say about it.

DEE DEE: This is so exciting!

BEACHCOMBER: *(Pretends to spit it out the milk.)* Ptah! Milk! Always hated the stuff. Reminds me of cows. *(Shudders.)*

CANDY: They're in the waiting zone, watching for the perfect wave and picking a take-off spot.

DAVID: It's always a good idea to watch a few sets, to see where the curl of the wave begins.

PAM: That's where they're going to want to drop in.

FRANKIE: It looks like they're talking to each other out there.

ANNETTE: Probably trying to psych each other out. Gaining a mental edge.

SCENE shifts to the SURFING AREA, where BRODY and STICK are sitting on their surfboards.

BRODY: Hey, brah. The ocean's a pretty big place. Room for both of us, you know?

STICK: Yeah, sure. Sorry about being so rough back there. I was just playing it up for the surfer girls.

BRODY: No problemo, brah. I get it.

STICK: *(Extends hand.)* Are we good?

BRODY: *(Shakes hands.)* Yeah, man. It's all about riding the wave on home, right?

STICK: Actually, it's all about winning. Loser!

STICK pulls BRODY off his surfboard. STICK "paddles", then pops up onto his surfboard, balancing as if riding a wave. BRODY climbs back up on his board, pops up and "follows" STICK. SCENE SHIFTS back to the beach.

DAVID: Did you see that? Foul!

PAM: Stick should be disqualified for poor sportsmanship.

DITZY: *(Consults clipboard.)* Actually, there's nothing in the rules about conduct in the waiting zone. Not unless they back paddle in on someone else's wave. And since Brody was not actually on his board when the swell started to crest, he lost his place.

DELORES: Stick is the best surfer. He should be able to pick any wave he wants.

DEE DEE: Any way you look at, that was a mean thing to do.

CANDY: Brody bounced back quickly though.

TERRI: Nothing can keep Brody down.

DELORES: He shouldn't be there. That's Stick's wave!

DITZY: At least we can judge their skill simultaneously.

BRODY and STICK "surf" side by side.

ANNETTE: I hate to admit it, but Stick does have solid skills.

DELORES: Of course he does. He totally rips.

FRANKIE: It's his attitude that needs improvement.

DEE DEE: They're neck and neck.

CANDY: Maybe it will be a tie.

TERRI: Even if it is, Brody will beat Stick in the final stage of the competition and become the Boss Kahuna.

DELORES: If he makes it that far.

FRANKIE: What do you mean?

ANNETTE: Stick's not going to sabotage Brody, is he? He'll be disqualified.

DELORES: Not if it's an "accident." After all, it's not Stick's fault if Brody jumped on the same wave.

DITZY: I don't believe in accidents.

DELORES: Wait around, Ditzzy. You might just see a big one.

SCENE shifts to STICK and BRODY surfing. STICK leans toward BRODY.

BRODY: Hey, watch it, dude. You're too close.

STICK: *(Sarcastic.)* Oh, sorry, "brah."

BRODY: No, really. This is dangerous. Back off.

STICK: No, YOU back off. In fact, why don't you just crash and burn?
(Swerves again.) Oops.

BRODY: Aaagh!

BRODY tumbles off his board, disappears. SCENE shifts to beach where all but DITZY watch in horror.

TERRI: Noooo!

FRANKIE: Oh, that's got to hurt.

ANNETTE: What a wipe out!

DAVID: The worst kind. Brody went "over-the-falls".

DEE DEE: What does that mean?

DITZY: It means he was sucked back over the top of the wave as it broke, and then went into free-fall down the lip.

TERRI: Lip?

PAM: The most powerful part of the wave. Strong enough to smash him into the ocean floor.

DAVID: Not a lot of surfers walk away from something like that.

DELORES: Stick rode the wave all the way in. Guess that makes him the winner.

STICK EXITS surf area with his surfboard.

CANDY: *(To DAVID and PAM.)* Well don't just stand there. You're lifeguards. Rescue Brody!

DAVID: We have a better vantage point here than in the water. As soon as he breaks surface or we spot his board...

PAM: We'll go straight to him.

STICK ENTERS with his surfboard.

STICK: Did you see me shoot through that barrel? Totally tubular!

DELORES: You were awesome, Stick.

FRANKIE: We saw what you did to Brody.

ANNETTE: That was way uncool.

STICK: What are you talking about? He shouldered in on my wave. Shoulda known better. So where is he?

BEACHCOMBER wanders over.

TERRI: He hasn't come up yet!

STICK: Oh, man. Too bad. Ah, well. Those are the breaks.

CANDY: He could be seriously hurt.

DEE DEE: Or worse.

BEACHCOMBER: Yeah. He could be me. *(Wanders away, muttering.)*

DAVID: *(To PAM.)* Call it in. I'm swimming out there.

PAM: I'll be right behind you with the rescue skiff.

DAVID EXITS toward SURF AREA. PAM EXITS in another direction.

TERRI: *(Calls out over audience.)* Brody! Brody!

ANNETTE: He can't be gone. I'll go down the beach and search.
(EXITS.)

FRANKIE: And I'll go up. He's got to come ashore somewhere.
(EXITS in opposite direction.)

STICK: *(To DITZY.)* So if he drowns, does that make me the Boss Kahuna of Delta del Rey Beach?

CANDY: No, it makes you a complete and total loser.

DELORES: Hey, you can't talk to my boyfriend like that.

DEE DEE: And you're just as bad for egging him on.

DITZY sets down her clipboard, moves to CENTER STAGE.

TERRI: *(Sinks to her knees.)* Brody!

DITZY: *(To TERRI.)* The young man shall not die. *(Reaches into pockets and grabs two fistfuls of white confetti. To audience.)* I have foreseen it. *(Tosses white confetti into the air, raises her hands, arms bent at the elbow so her palms are facing out parallel to her ears. She ululates a strange, high wailing/yodeling cry and spins in place.)* Ai-li-li-li-l!

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

TIME TRAVEL SEQUENCE: LIGHTS FLASH and continue FLASHING, in many colors if possible. CAST, except for DITZY, EXITS, spinning and carrying off all props and furniture except for BRODY'S back pack. They make quick changes into their Egyptian costumes. This set change should be carefully choreographed. SOUND: More surf guitar music or mysterious "time travel" music/sound effect. Snack Shack rotates or is removed, revealing Cleopatra's Pavilion, complete with two thrones on a raised dais, a small table with an antique looking pitcher and goblet, gauzy drapes and ancient Egyptian decor. If possible, DITZY transforms into HATHOR ON STAGE. Her breakaway baggy outer dress is pulled away by spinning STAGE HAND or CAST MEMBER, revealing her Egyptian costume underneath. A STAGE HAND or cast member spins across the stage with her cow-horned headdress, which she puts on, preferably while still spinning. With the lights flashing and all the movement onstage, it's possible that her transformation will appear magical. Halfway through the stage transformation, the MUSIC CHANGES to Middle Eastern instrumental music, upbeat, exotic, percussive, similar to belly dancing tunes. LIGHTS return to normal. MUSIC OUT. DITZY/HATHOR is alone ON STAGE. She stops spinning.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

HATHOR: (*Wobbles a bit.*) Woووو. I'm dizzy. (*To audience.*) No, in California I WAS Ditz. But in this time and place, I am called Hathor, Lady of the Stars. Goddess of love, protection, destiny, dancing and... (*Points to horned headdress*) ... cows. Fate has decreed that Brody come here to Egypt, in 41 BC, for a time. (*Looks OFF STAGE sees BRODY, moves back to Pavilion, out of sight.*)

BRODY: (*ENTERS stumbling, legs like jelly, sets down surfboard, collapses.*) Whoa. I feel like I was stuck inside an industrial sized washing machine set to "mangle." Last thing I remember, Stick was swerving toward me so I had to bail. (*Smiles.*) Still, that was an awesomely epic wipe out. (*Pats the surfboard.*) And my board is okay. Not a ding on it. Like they say: "A bad day surfing is still better than a good day working." (*Looks around.*) So where is everybody? (*Calls.*) Guys? (*Thinks.*) Maybe the wave carried me down the beach. (*Looks around.*) No one. (*Looks down.*) But my back pack's here. At least I think it's mine. (*Kneels, goes through belongings, bringing each out and putting it back.*) Yep. That's my stuff: shark repellent, suntan lotion, flip flops, notebook of historic and awesomely epic waves I wish I could have ridden... (*Pulls out a clear plastic sandwich bag containing a harmonica. Relieved, takes it out.*) Monica! Did you miss me? (*Taps it, plays a few terrible bars of horrible music.*) Excellent. (*Puts harmonica in pocket. Packs everything else up, puts on back pack, and picks up his surfboard.*) Guess I'd better find the dudes and dudettes. Tell 'em I'm a bit thrashed, but otherwise copacetic.

BRODY EXITS. HATHOR steps out from her place of concealment at the Pavilion.

HATHOR: He will need to adjust to this new time zone. In the meantime, I must prepare the others. The future of Egypt is at stake. (*Takes a deep breath, hands to cheeks and shouts.*) Moo!

POTHINUS, MAXIMUS and GLUTEUS ENTER.

POTHINUS: I wish you wouldn't do that!

GLUTEUS: Yeah. You sound like a bull horn. (*Pretends to blow a horn.*) Moo! Cow, bull, bull horn. Get it?

GLUTEUS laughs and snorts. POTHINUS glares at him. GLUTEUS spins, marches to behind MAXIMUS, stands at attention.

HATHOR: I am a priestess of the cow goddess Hathor. In what other manner should I summon Cleopatra's court?

POTHINUS: It is not your place to summon anyone. I am the Grand Vizier, her chief adviser. If there is some news you wish to relate, tell me. I shall decide if it's important enough to present before her highness, Queen Cleopatra.

HATHOR: I do not answer to you, dung beetle.

MAXIMUS: (*Tries to make peace.*) What was it you wanted to announce, Hathor?

HATHOR: And I do not answer to Mark Antony's Roman lackeys.

MAXIMUS: Not even if I say "please"?

HATHOR: (*Relents.*) Well, if you put it that way.

GLUTEUS: (*Interrupts.*) He does. Maximus is the politest soldier in the general's army.

MAXIMUS: Thank you, Gluteus.

GLUTEUS: See? "Please" and "thank you," one right after the other. A regular gentleman, he is.

POTHINUS: Are you two quite finished?

MAXIMUS: (*Bows head.*) Apologies, Pothinus.

GLUTEUS: There he goes again! (*Laughs, snorts. Mocks.*) Apologies, Pothinus.

POTHINUS surreptitiously dips his hand into a pocket or pouch and strides over to GLUTEUS.

POTHINUS: Silence, fool, or feel the power of my magical curse!

POTHINUS mimes blowing powder from his palm into GLUTEUS' face.

GLUTEUS: *(Screws up his face, making bizarre expressions, takes a deep breath and sneezes.)* Hubba, heeba, habba, Hachoo!

MAXIMUS: Bless you, Gluteus.

GLUTEUS: Thank, you, Maximus. *(Sneezes again, and again.)*
Achoo! Achoo!

POTHINUS: *(To HATHOR.)* Now, what is it that is so important?

HATHOR: Never mind. The queen is coming now.

MAXIMUS offers GLUTEUS a handkerchief. HANDMAIDS, including AHANEITH, MERNEITH and HERNEITH ENTER LEFT. AHANEITH carries a trumpet-type horn. She puts it to her lips, takes a deep breath and is about to blow. Instead, GLUTEUS blows his nose loudly and trumpet-like into the handkerchief.

GLUTEUS: Braaap! *(AHANEITH looks at her horn, shakes it, and shrugs.)*

MERNEITH: *(Announces.)* Her royal majesty, Queen Cleopatra of Egypt...

HERNEITH: *(Announces.)* And her royal consort, General Marcus Antonius.

AHANEITH starts to lift horn up to her lips, but before she gets there, GLUTEUS blows his nose loudly, once again.

GLUTEUS: Braaap! *(He wiggles the handkerchief as he finishes off with two last, quick fanfare blasts.)* Braap. Braap.

AHANEITH gives up. GLUTEUS offers handkerchief to MAXIMUS, who politely refuses to accept it back. GLUTEUS stuffs the handkerchief into his chest armor. GLUTEUS and MAXIMUS stand at attention, salute with right fist to left shoulder, facing OFF. AHANEITH, MERNEITH and HERNEITH take their places besides the thrones. HATHOR watches from a discreet distance. POTHINUS performs an elaborate, insincere and punctilious bow. CLEOPATRA and MARK ANTONY ENTER LEFT, her hand on his. NEFERTERI ENTERS LEFT and follows behind with a large fan on a long pole, fanning them. MARK ANTONY leads CLEOPATRA up onto the dais, where she sits on the larger throne. He sits beside her. NEFERTERI takes position behind and between them. POTHINUS, still in low bow and face downward, skootches his feet forward, approaching the dais in a rapid shuffle.

POTHINUS: Your Majesty, Queen of the Nile, goddess among mortals...

CLEOPATRA: What is it, Pothinus?

POTHINUS: I have something very important to report.

CLEOPATRA: Well?

POTHINUS: Something very, very important. Of inestimable importance, in point of fact.

CLEOPATRA: And?

POTHINUS: Well...

MARK ANTONY: Spit it out, you insufferable dung beetle!

HANDMAIDS titter. POTHINUS grimaces, straightens, turns and points at HATHOR.

POTHINUS: That woman wishes to speak with you.

CLEOPATRA: That's it?

POTHINUS: Yes, but as I am your Grand Vizier, she had to come to me first.

HATHOR: I did no such thing!

POTHINUS: Did so.

HATHOR: Did not!

POTHINUS: *(Turns to CLEOPATRA, smiles, bows. Out of the side of his mouth.)* Did so.

HATHOR: Ugh!

CLEOPATRA: Hathor, dear peculiar and trusted priestess. What did you wish to tell me?

HATHOR steps forward, bumping POTHINUS off balance.

HATHOR: Just that a strange being has been sighted by the Nile River, Cleopatra. You must bring him here at once.

MARK ANTONY: A strange being by the Nile? *(Scoffs.)* Probably just another crocodile.

ALL react to the word "crocodile" the way they had to the word "shark" in the first scene. MAXIMUS and GLUTEUS take a step back. HANDMAIDS become extra alert, shifting from passive handmaids to warrior bodyguards in an instant.

POTHINUS: *(Looks right and left, alarmed.)* Eek!

CLEOPATRA: Dearest, Mark Antony...

MARK ANTONY: Yes, my beloved Cleopatra?

CLEOPATRA: You know I've talked to you about saying that word.

MARK ANTONY: What, crocodile?

ALL shudder.

POTHINUS: Eek!

CLEOPATRA: Yes, dear. You can only say that word when there really is one nearby. Otherwise you could start a panic. It's like crying "wolf" in a sheep pen. Do me a favor, darling, and "ixnay on the ocodilecray". Okay?

MARK ANTONY: As you wish, my queen.

POTHINUS: We'd better investigate. *(To MAXIMUS and GLUTEUS.)*

You, Roman soldiers. Do your duty and go to the Nile and capture this croc... uh...strange being. Bring it back here.

MAXIMUS and GLUTEUS: Sir, yes sir!

THEY salute, fist to heart. They don't move.

CLEOPATRA: *(To HANDMAIDS.)* Ladies? Would you mind going to check this strange being out for me?

HANDMAIDS: Yes, my queen!

HANDMAIDS race OFF STAGE LEFT, taking props — trumpet, fan, etc. with them.

GLUTEUS: *(To MARK ANTONY.)* We don't take orders from him, do we, General?

MARK ANTONY: Who is your commanding officer?

MAXIMUS: You, sir.

MARK ANTONY: And who is the dung beetle?

MAXIMUS and GLUTEUS: *(Point at POTHINUS.)* Him, sir!

POTHINUS: Hiss!

MARK ANTONY: Correct.

HANDMAIDS run ON FROM LEFT. AHANEITH carries a net. MERNEITH and HERNEITH carry poles with loops on one end. NEFERTERI carries a pool noodle. THEY stop, curtsy to CLEOPATRA.

CLEOPATRA: Go get 'em, girls!

HANDMAIDS utter a high-pitched ululating warrior's cry, run OFF RIGHT.

HANDMAIDS: Ai-li-li-li-li!

MARK ANTONY: *(To CLEOPATRA.)* Do you want me to send my men as backup? In case your handmaids get in over their heads?

MAXIMUS and GLUTEUS shake their heads "no" and gesture as if to say that's the LAST thing they wish to do.

CLEOPATRA: *(Smiles.)* I think they'll manage. Egyptian women have hunted croco-you-know-what's for centuries. *(Pats his hand.)* But thank you, dear. That was a nice gesture.

MAXIMUS and GLUTEUS relax.

HATHOR: The strange being must not be harmed. He may hold the fate of the kingdom in his hands.

POTHINUS: Oh, give it a rest, witch woman.

CLEOPATRA: Can't you two get along? Honestly. One of these days I'm going to step back and let you duel it out.

POTHINUS: I relish the opportunity, your majesty. It's time someone showed this bovine priestess who's in charge. *(Sticks tongue out at HATHOR.)*

HATHOR: Be careful what you wish for, you fraud. I am not one to be trifled with.

POTHINUS: Be a good cow girl and go chew your cud.

HANDMAIDS ENTER RIGHT, with BRODY in tow. MERNEITH and HERNEITH have secured the loops around his body, pinning his arms to the sides. They keep him at a distance with the poles. The net is draped over his head and shoulders, down to the knees. AHANEITH carries his surfboard. NEFERTERI follows, holding the pool noodle ready to smack him. GLUTEUS and MAXIMUS quake in their armor.

MARK ANTONY: That was quick.

CLEOPATRA stands.

CLEOPATRA: Bring the creature to me.

POTHINUS: Be careful, your majesty. Who knows what kind of strange powers it may have.

HANDMAIDS lead BRODY to CENTER.

MARK ANTONY: Did it put up much of a fight?

MERNEITH: Not really. We took him by surprise.

HERNEITH: Never knew what hit him.

CLEOPATRA: What sort of creature is it?

NEFERTERI: Well, he has a hump on his back, like a camel. But his face is quite agreeable.

OTHER HANDMAIDS nod in agreement, sigh.

AHANEITH: *(Holds up surfboard.)* He carried this enormous sword under his arm. *(Gestures by swinging it.)* You could take out an entire line of warriors with just one stroke.

POTHINUS: That settles it. He's an enemy. Let's kill him.

MARK ANTONY: Now, now. Let's not be hasty. How much threat could just one creature be?

CLEOPATRA: Remove the net. Let me see him.

AHANEITH sets the surfboard down, removes the net. BRODY blinks, looks around.

BRODY: *(Looks at the OTHERS.)* Cowabunga, dudes and dudettes. Uber righteous rags and whatnot.

NEFERTERI: It is some strange tongue. We can't make sense of it.

BRODY: Totally rad, man. *(Admires MAXIMUS and GLUTEUS's armor.)* Epicly awesome, brah.

AHANEITH: See? It's just gibberish.

HATHOR picks up pitcher from the stand, mimes pouring "milk" into a cup or goblet that is pre-loaded with white confetti, takes it to BRODY.

BRODY: *(To HATHOR.)* Hey, Ditzzy. How's it hangin', dudette?

HATHOR: Drink this translating elixir. *(Whispers.)* In this place and time I am Hathor, not Ditzzy.

BRODY: Copacetic. Hathor. Right on, dudette.

BRODY takes cup, tries to bring it up to his mouth, but can't, due to the ropes pinning his arms down. HATHOR steps back.

Bummer.

BRODY squirms around, trying to get the cup to his lips.

MERNEITH: He doesn't seem particularly aggressive.

HERNEITH: I actually think he's harmless.

CLEOPATRA: If only we knew what language he speaks.

MARK ANTONY: Then we could find out where's he's from and what he wants.

POTHINUS: Hathor seems to understand him. Does anyone else find that suspicious?

BRODY manages to sit down, and using his hands and feet together, holds the cup and rolls back, pouring the white confetti/milk onto his [closed] mouth and all over his face.

BRODY: Glug, glug, glug. Ahh. *(Drops the cup, gets on his knees, and shakes his face and hair like a dog. OTHERS take a step back. To HATHOR.)* Thanks for the milk... "Hathor." *(Winks.)*

MAXIMUS: Did you hear that? His first intelligible word was "thanks." He has manners.

GLUTEUS: Yeah, and now he makes sense.

BRODY: So what am I doing here?

CLEOPATRA: We were about to ask YOU that.

BRODY: Beats me. I remember wiping out at Delta del Rey beach, then the next thing I knew I was here.

MERNEITH: His clothing is most unusual.

NEFERTERI: And yet it suits him.

POTHINUS: He could be a spy for your sister, my queen.

CLEOPATRA: Arsinoe? Why would she send a spy here?

HERNEITH: Because she's jealous.

HATHOR: Rumor has it she has allied herself with Octavian.

MERNEITH: She went and got her own Roman general boyfriend! Just like you.

AHANEITH: Arsinoe won't rest until she has taken your place as Queen of Egypt.

CLEOPATRA: Mark Antony? What should we do?

POTHINUS: We could kill the spy, for starters.

MARK ANTONY: My soldiers will protect you, Cleopatra. You are safe with me.

NEFERTERI: *(To BRODY.)* Tell us the truth. Are you a spy?

BRODY: *(Slips or steps out of loops to stand freely.)* I spy with my little eye...a bunch of weirdoes, that's what I spy. *(HANDMAIDS take an aggressive stance.)* Whoa, dudettes. Chill out, will ya? Lemme get my bearings. *(Thinks.)* Mark Antony. Cleopatra. Egypt. *(Realizes. Points at MARK ANTONY.)* You're THE Mark Antony, right? *(Points at CLEOPATRA.)* And you're THE REAL Cleopatra?

POTHINUS: Don't play the fool, fool. Everyone in Egypt knows Mark Antony and Cleopatra.

BRODY: Whoa. I've heard of getting clocked by a wave, but not one that set the clock back...like more than two thousand years! *(Rubs face.)* My mind is totally blown. *(Takes off backpack.)*

HERNEITH: He's removing his hump!

MERNEITH: It could be some kind of weapon.

NEFERTERI: *(Protects CLEOPATRA.)* Stay back, my queen.

MARK ANTONY: *(To MAXIMUS and GLUTEUS.)* Hey, guys? Are you planning on protecting me, too?

MAXIMUS: Oh, sorry sir. Terribly sorry about that.

MAXIMUS arches over to protect MARK ANTONY. GLUTEUS follows.

GLUTEUS: Likewise, general.

AHANEITH: The creature is opening his hump!

BRODY: It's just a backpack. *(Holds it up.)* See?

POTHINUS snatches it away.

POTHINUS: I'll take that. *(Reaches inside, grabs something.)* Aha! There IS a weapon inside! *(Pulls out a flip flop, waves it around. ALL step back.)* It's some kind of bludgeon, for beating people over the head. *(Wobbles it.)*

BRODY: No, dude. It's a flip flop. *(Reaches out for flip flop, POTHINUS hugs it close to his chest.)* Do you mind? The sand is getting kind of hot.

BRODY reaches into backpack, pulls out the other flip flop.

POTHINUS: Another one! *(Holds it out as if to duel BRODY with it.)*

BRODY: Flip flop. Not a weapon.

BRODY shows POTHINUS his flip flop, slowly bends over, puts it on his foot. ALL bend over and watch. BRODY snatches the second flip flop from POTHINUS. ALL jump back. Puts it on his other foot.

Flexible footwear for the beach. Waterproof and sand shakes right off.

BRODY shows them off like a foot model. ALL except POTHINUS nod, realizing.

HERNEITH: Ingenious.

MERNEITH: Remarkable.

POTHINUS: *(Reaches into the bag, pulls out shark repellent.)* And what's this? More footwear? Looks like a sealed container for secret messages.

BRODY: Hang on, dude. Better be careful with that.

POTHINUS: Why? Are you afraid that if I open this your identity as a spy for Arsinoe will be revealed?

BRODY: Just giving you fair warning. That's pretty bodacious shark repellent, brah.

POTHINUS: Shark repellent indeed! There's no such thing. *(Grapples with the canister, accidentally sprays himself.)* Aaagh! Oh! It burns! I've been poisoned! I'm dying! Someone save me!

OTHERS watch, interested, but not particularly concerned.

Well? Isn't somebody going to help me?

BRODY: Rinse your eyes. You'll be okay.

POTHINUS: I'm blind! My face is melting away like wax! Oh, the humanity! Mommy!

GLUTEUS: *(Observes.)* Looks like that curse he put on me got him back.

MAXIMUS: *(Nods.)* And then some.

POTHINUS: *(Rubs eyes with fists.)* Oh woe! Oh misery! Waah!

HATHOR: *(Casually reaches over for the pitcher of white confetti/milk.)* Want milk?

HATHOR dashes POTHINUS in the face with white confetti/milk, sets pitcher back.

POTHINUS: *Aaagh! (Shakes like a dog. Feels face.)* Wait, wait. Actually, that feels much better. *(Sighs.)* I can see. *(Sighs, adjusts clothing, acts as if nothing happened.)* I'm good.

BRODY: I tried to warn you, dude.

POTHINUS: *(To CLEOPATRA.)* Do you see? Obviously a spy. An assassin! Your majesty, you are fortunate that I intercepted this poisoner before he could get close to you. Once again, I have saved the kingdom.

MARK ANTONY: Well, that might be stretching things a bit. But that was pretty exciting.

CLEOPATRA: I'm sorry, strange young man. But Pothinus is right. As attractive as you may be... *(HANDMAIDS all nod, sigh.)* We cannot allow the safety of this court to be challenged. I therefore sentence you to... *(Turns to MARK ANTONY.)* Banishment?

MARK ANTONY: That seems fair. Send him away.

POTHINUS: Banishment? When he tried to assassinate you and your Grand Vizier? The proper punishment is obvious. Death by a thousand dings.

HANDMAIDS react in horror.

HERNEITH: Oh no, not that.

MERNEITH: Not death by a thousand dings.

AHANEITH: That's too cruel.

POTHINUS: Nevertheless, the law is clear.

MARK ANTONY: *(To CLEOPATRA.)* That's a law?

CLEOPATRA: I guess so. I'm not too clear on legal things.

POTHINUS: And as reward for exposing the spy and preventing assassination and mayhem, I claim the right to execute him myself.

BRODY: *(To POTHINUS.)* Hey, brah. I know we got off on the wrong foot and all, but death by a thousand dings? Sounds kind of harsh, man.

POTHINUS: Don't try to beg for mercy, assassin. Handmaids, bring me the stinger dinger.

HANDMAIDS look sadly at BRODY, EXIT LEFT.

HATHOR: Your majesty. I beg you to reconsider. This traveler has the power to save your kingdom.

CLEOPATRA: Sorry, Hathor. The law's the law.

POTHINUS: *(To HATHOR.)* Yeah. So nanner nanner.

SOUND: Rumbling. ALL react as the earth shakes.

BRODY: Whoa, what's going on? Earthquake?

MARK ANTONY: Oh, it's just Mount Vesuvius acting up again.

BRODY: Vesuvius?

MAXIMUS: A volcano, just across the Mediterranean Sea, not far from Rome.

GLUTEUS: One of these days she's really going to blow. Glad I'm over here in Egypt.

MAXIMUS: You're absolutely right, Gluteus. Volcanic eruptions can be quite messy.

SOUND: Rumbling, earth shakes again.

CLEOPATRA: *(Looks OFF.)* That's odd. Now there's a plume of smoke rising up to the sky.

MARK ANTONY: They've been predicting "the big one" for years. But you're right. This could be it.

HATHOR: It is an omen of disaster, a portent of doom, if should you execute this boy.

HANDMAIDS ENTER in procession: NEFERTERI, AHANEITH, HERNEITH, MERNEITH. NEFERTERI carries a platter with a lid. They STOP. AHANEITH lifts the lid, hands it to HERNEITH, who hands it to MERNEITH. NEFERTERI picks up the stinger dinger. It is a teeny tiny [cardboard] hatchet, about the size of a doctor's reflex hammer. AHANEITH takes platter from NEFERTERI, hands it to HERNEITH. AHANEITH picks up a musical triangle and beater from the platter.

HANDMAIDS: The stinger dinger, your majesty.

BRODY: *(Looks at it.)* Whoa. Now I know why you call it death by a thousand dings.

POTHINUS tries to take stinger dinger from NEFERTERI, who doesn't want to release it. They have a brief tug of war.

POTHINUS: Give it to me, girl.

NEFERTERI: No. I don't want you to ding him.

POTHINUS: Give it to me, now.

NEFERTERI: No. It's just too cruel.

POTHINUS: For the last time, let me have it!

NEFERTERI releases the stinger dinger. POTHINUS dings himself in the face with it. SOUND EFFECT: AHANEITH "dings" the musical triangle with the beater.

Ow!

GLUTEUS: Only nine hundred ninety-nine to go.

POTHINUS: That one doesn't count!

BRODY: What's the platter for?

POTHINUS: Why, it's for your head, my boy. Your head. *(Evil laugh.)*

Mwah ha ha ha ha. *(To MAXIMUS and GLUTEUS.)* Now do your duty.

MAXIMUS and GLUTEUS sigh, march over to BRODY, force him to his knees and hold his shoulders. POTHINUS lines up for the first ding. BRODY lifts his head.

BRODY: Wait a minute.

SOLDIERS push his head back down, exposing his neck. His head bounces back up.

Let's talk about this.

SOLDIERS push his head back down. POTHINUS prepares to administer the first ding. BRODY's head pops up. POTHINUS stops mid-ding.

I think I know why I'm here.

SOUND: rumbling. ALL react to the earthquake. During the distraction, BRODY crawls quickly on hands and knees to his backpack, reaches in, pulls out the book.

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