

# MYTHSTORIES



Anthology Comedy Series

**LOGLINE:**

In this oddly funny anthology series, a quirky professor tells legendary stories that have been passed down by word of mouth and that may now seem unbelievable and ridiculous.

**MYTHSTORIES** (or *Mythical History*) is an anthology comic series that aspires to be whimsical, slightly sarcastic and accurate at the same time. Each 10-15 minutes episode tells a diverse legend from beginning to end in the most truthful way, thereby maintaining its own singularity. Every season is about a different time, world and tradition, being therefore subdivided into distinct imaginations: Greek, Peruvian, Celtic, Etruscan, Egyptian or Mesopotamian. Still having a vast range of other possible mythologies to recount.

The common thread between episodes, other than its language and style, is an old, serious, plump and balding professor. P.L.J. Rurncoffer (abbreviation for Pierson Lenny Jediah Rurncoffer Senior) teaches at the University of the Third Age in a non-specified, english-speaking town. With several books and papers in front of him, he tells legends to his class, becoming the narrator of the show. For privacy reasons unfortunately the audience is not allowed to know the faces and comments of the students who attend his class one night a week.

Rurncoffer's routine is starting every lesson by briefly introducing himself and what he's going to tell and ending it by asking his students to think about what they just heard until the next lesson. Dialogues are very direct and often sound unnatural because are the fruits of a narration.

The first season may regard different tales of Greek mythology. Including :

*(The following myths have been passed down by word of mouth and I sincerely apologize for all the incongruities)*

- How Midas, after becoming a music contest judge, had to deal with ass ears;
- How Callisto turned from virgin into bear and then into a constellation;
- Why an abashed Phylyra decided to become a linden after giving birth to a centaur;
- How spending the night in Procrustes's bed would make your limbs stretched or amputated;
- How Sciron would trick people to wash his feet only to then throw them of a cliff;
- Why Dionysus had to carve and use a wooden phallus to honor Prosymnus' death.

Since time has not been nice with these type of mentalities and imaginations, they may now seem unbelievable and ridiculous. What we see today as an extremely stupid situation wasn't perceived as odd ages ago. The absurdity of this series is due to the simple influence of culture and our mindset. For this reason the script tries not to highlight the strangenesses of the plot - despite having outlandish dialogues and sarcastic comments - but presents them like everything else. Furthermore its observational but peculiar narration keeps the series fanciful and zany.

The hope is that it's possible for the audience to simply enjoy the absurdity of the show. Some other viewers may also start questioning the purpose of telling these stories and if what they are seeing is just a subtle way of displaying pure silliness or they can find some other meaning in it.

Given that it's impossible to know for sure the aspects and traits of the characters that nowadays are just part of a myth, this choice is left to the imagination of who recounts or listens to their stories. Therefore it should not surprise anyone that it's possible to narrate events that take place in Greece, Ireland, Italy, Egypt or Middle East (India, Peru, Japan, Polynesia or wherever) but performed by actors of a different ethnicity. After all the series also utilizes a language that didn't exist back then. Consequently, an Indian kid can interpret a Greek god just like an African-American woman can become a noble pale figure of the Celtic mythology, since if they fit the role they are able to reincarnate their spirit and their intents. After all, we don't always imagine things that make sense.

MYTHSTORIES

Mythical History, Lesson 101

" King Midas :  
The shame of an incompetent judge "

(part 1)

written by

Cecilia Michelangeli

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and we sincerely apologize for all the incongruities "*

FADE IN:

**PROFESSOR'S TALKING HEAD, DESK**

P.L.J. RURNCOFFER sits in front of a blackboard, arranging a few blank papers on his cheap desk. Nothing more is visible.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER

OK. Perfect.

(looks up)

Good evening, everyone. It's great to see so many of you today. I am Professor P.L.J. Rurncoffer of the Department of Liberal Arts. Welcome to the first taped lesson of Greek Mythology.

He opens a book, scrolls it, then closes it.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (CONT'D)

Today I will tell you the story of King Midas and why he was ashamed of his ears. Please, take notes... or not, we're a University of the Third Age, you are all adults, you can do as you want. You can even stop attending if you please, stop watching, switch c--

**EXT. BRIGHT WOODS - DAY**

Quiet. Everything is very quiet.

MIDAS, a too well-dressed, glistening man, walks in the woods leisurely, with the same slow and confident gait of every epic tale character.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

For some good reasons, King Midas suddenly became kind and generous with people. He started living a country life, hanging out with the satyr Pan, learning how to enjoy a simpler hippie life--

Midas sits next to PAN, the faun-satyr of wild nature and rustic life. Pan plays the flute.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

--and quit eating gold.

PAN

Do you want more?

He points at some food boxes filled with chunks of grass.

MIDAS

Thanks, I'm still full.

He writhes and grimaces, holding his belly. Pan plays again.

MIDAS (CONT'D)

Asking for the ability to turn things to gold with my touch didn't work as planned. Luckily for me, Gods listened to my requests and changed my life for the last time.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

Not the last time. Luckily for us, Gods had fun with him once again.

MIDAS

(points at the flute)

Do you accept requests?

Pan nods cheerful.

MIDAS (CONT'D)

Please stop.

PAN

I'm not a God, but playing I become one... Well, then I might be a God after all.

He plays a few acutes as Midas rolls his eyes.

PAN (CONT'D)

I should do something with this.  
I'm too good.

MIDAS

You could start your own school, just wander around with younglings and explain music or whatever.

Pan plays monotone long notes.

PAN

(through the flute)

Why would I?

(lowers the flute)

(MORE)

PAN (CONT'D)

Music starts and ends with me, it doesn't need anyone else. I told you I'm that great.

MIDAS

Music started with Apollo.  
(looks into the camera)  
That's how our world works.

PAN

Apollo!  
(looks up at the sky)  
That's what I can do!

MIDAS

Yes! Him too!  
(looks up)  
We can ask him what makes his music so gentle and catchy and learn--

PAN

No! I can make him say that I'm musically better than him.

MIDAS

(over excited)  
Apollo, God of music and poetry, how cool is that! He drives a four horses solar-powered cart, owns a bow, dances with the wolves, he's handsome like his swans and cicadas and for some reason he also protect pioneers and spreads plague. He's cool, man-goat! Do you think he can share some of that knowledge with us? Nah, he's busy-- too busy--

PAN

Why would I ever want that? I mean, yeah, he lay with Daphne, she's hot but--

MIDAS

Meh, she's too tall and wooden for my taste. Maybe I could ask him for a prophecy... no, leave him alone, he's a busy God--

PAN

I'll challenge Apollo! I will prove I am the best of all musicians!

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

He doesn't know every musician.

PAN  
Everyone will be aware of my  
superiority!

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
No one will care.

PAN  
You are right. Apollo's busy. He's  
the God of healing when he doesn't  
spread plague. He doesn't have time  
to be better than me!

He raises his arms toward the sky.

PAN (CONT'D)  
I challenge Apollo!

A sudden bright LIGHT. Chaos and noises from all around.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
By the way, real quick. The lovely,  
sweet Aristotle believed that no  
God heard Midas' previous prayers.

**QUICK CUTAWAY** of Midas, naked, praying and wriggling in pain,  
surrounded by blocks of golden clothes and foods.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
So he just starved to death before  
anything of the story I'm going to  
tell even began.

Midas' skeletal, dead body.

**BACK TO** the golden light.

APOLLO appears in the woods, backlit, stroking a lyre.

No one seems surprised. The light fades quickly.

APOLLO  
I heard of Pan's challenge.

MIDAS  
Just half a goat challenged you.

He laughs.

APOLLO  
Great, I love to defeat mortals.

Midas's smile fades. Apollo walks up to them, menacing.



MIDAS  
Satyr Pan, tell the God you didn't  
mean that. We always kid around.

PAN  
I kid you not.

Midas glances at his paws. Apollo stops at their feet.

MIDAS  
Satyr Pan, I-I don't like this  
situation... He's a God--Satyr Pan.

Apollo examines them both. Pan stands smug.

MIDAS (CONT'D)  
Satyr Pan, do something!

Apollo cracks his fingers.

MIDAS (CONT'D)  
SATYR PAN!

APOLLO  
So, Satyr Pan-- It's Satyr Pan,  
right?

PAN  
It's just Pan, actually.

Apollo glares at Midas, then slowly turns to Pan.

APOLLO  
Are you sure you want to face me?

Pan turns towards him.

PAN  
I am facing you.

APOLLO  
Good. I rise to the challenge.

PAN  
Good. I'll rise to fame.

APOLLO  
The contest is on.

MIDAS  
(suddenly thrilled)  
Uuuh, I've never attended to any  
contest or challenge!

He sits on a stump, shifting his gaze from one to the other with childish excitement, then picks up a food box and starts nibbling the grass.

APOLLO

We just have to jury-rig a jury.  
Who could it be?!

He walks around, touching trees like he's taking them into consideration, insects crawl on them. Then he turns. Midas bites around the dirt like he's eating a rib.

APOLLO (CONT'D)

Midas will act as our only jury.

MIDAS

(picking green parts stuck  
between his teeth)  
Me as a judge?

PAN

What do we need a judge for?

MIDAS

Me?

APOLLO

A judge is necessary to judge  
judiciously. We can't just judge  
each other, it wouldn't be a just  
judgment.

PAN

I would judge justly!

APOLLO

No, we need an external judge.

PAN

Ok then, Midas is our judge.

MIDAS

Me? Judge? Why me?

APOLLO

We're having a contest.

He starts stretching. Worried, Pan copies his moves.

Midas stands up and looks around him confused, as the two huffs louder, making wider movements, glancing at each other.

APOLLO (CONT'D)

Can he judge us both? Or will he give you an edge?

MIDAS

I can't judge.

PAN

He won't give any edge. He's a great judge with a sound judgment. No contest!

APOLLO

No contest? You gave up already?!

PAN

I meant, I do not contest Midas' judgment as a judge.

APOLLO

Alright, he can be impartial, I second you.

PAN

'Cause you'll never be first.

Apollo slaps his leg and turns to a dazed, green-toothed Midas.

APOLLO

You will be the-- the referee then. Our umpire, the sentence-giver, the one that will choose the winner, if you will.

MIDAS

I-I really don't feel like evaluating your ability, God.

Pan and Apollo are both surprised, just standing still.

Beat.

PAN

But everyone loves music contest. There is always someone screaming and crying and the one acting like emotions made them speechless.

APOLLO

Pathetic.

MIDAS

Oh, God, no-- you God! Too many things can go wrong in this contest. It just doesn't sound right to me.

PAN

Sure it won't if he plays.

APOLLO

Well, mortal, adjust to it. You better be a just judge or I'll use my juggernaut.

PAN

(naively)

We need a judge, Midas.

MIDAS

But I'm not used to muse on music! It's just an amusing jingle-jangle. Judge justly?! Art's objectively unjudgeable. How can an incompetent person judge other people's work? There wouldn't be any justice!

For a moment, it seems like they agree on that point. Midas stands there, waiting for their reaction.

APOLLO

You'll figure it out.

Pan pats Midas' shoulder.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

And that's how Midas adjusted to assent to an assessment he had no aptness nor reason to hasten on.

Apollo, dressed in white, and Pan, darker, stand on opposite sides. Midas is in front of them.

APOLLO

(stepping forwards)

Gods move first! Obviously.

He plays an elegant, classically composed piece on his lyre. Midas seems to enjoy it, yet zones out.

The music stops. Apollo stands proud in a statuesque pose.

PAN

Tsk, this is why so many musicians  
commit suicide. Midas, pay  
attention, it's my turn now.

He plays a note but stops immediately.

PAN (CONT'D)

No, I'll start with a flat note.

MIDAS

(cackles embarrassingly)  
I hope not.

Pan doesn't understand and acts offended.

He starts to play his small flute again. Right away the song  
turns into a swing sound-alike with many other instruments  
not in the scene. The flute makes the sound of a trumpet.  
Midas kind of dances to it.

However, Apollo still acts really cocky.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

Pan's flute was made by Athena, so  
he was pretty much cheating, that  
instrument was of divine perfection  
not him. Yeah, yeah, he covers it  
up saying he fashioned it out of  
his beloved's remains... Bah!

Flute-Trumpet solo.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Flute! What a sound!

The music stops.

They turn to a grinning Midas, confused on what he has to do.

PAN

So?

APOLLO

The judge just has to adjudge the  
champ.

Midas looks around him, confused and upset.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

Not knowing what to do Midas  
addressed a tree.

Midas turns to admire a tree, touching it inappropriately.

MIDAS

(whispers to the tree)  
I know nothing about music, but I  
like to dance.

Wind blows between the fronds.

MIDAS (CONT'D)

I'll never know why am I the right  
judge for this. However, I prefer  
to vote for my satyric friend  
rather than a powerful God known  
for his fury and revenge.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

And he was confident of his  
logical, hasty decision.

He turns again.

Midas and Apollo stare intently at each other for a while.  
Apollo. Midas. Apollo. Midas. Apollo. Midas. Apollo.

Now it's Pan that seems distracted.

MIDAS

Pan. Satyr Pan is the winner.

Midas' voice resounds in the trees.

PAN

Oh Midas, you've got a heart of  
gold!

APOLLO

This means revenge!

Apollo frowns at Midas, who's now terrified.

APOLLO (CONT'D)

Your gossamer, cartilaginous ears  
are not working very well, mortal.  
We better do something about that.

MIDAS

They never give me any problem,  
actually.

PAN

(blithely)  
Did Apollo win too?

MIDAS

Did Apollo win--? No! Wasn't this a contest?

PAN

One judge hence just one champ. I'm the best! I knew it! Your unbiased vote--

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER

Unbased.

PAN

--is now a certain proof. I am a better musician than Apollo!

He starts an awkward victory dance. Apollo points at Midas, giving evidence of his godlike power. He steps back, scared.

APOLLO

You will have ears to match the mind you had in judging. Yes, that will surely help you.

Midas finds himself with DONKEY EARS.

SMASH CUT TO:

**ANOTHER VERSION OF THE EVENTS**

Same woods. Pan plays, Apollo is concerned. There is someone else unknown with them. Midas is not there.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

Another version says that King Midas never judged any competition. Why on earth would he be?

**CUTAWAY** to Midas before :

MIDAS

Why me?

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

But he simply walked into their contest while taking an afternoon hike into the woods.

Midas appears, joyfully sauntering around.

MIDAS

Nice song, Pan. Even nicer than the one before!

Apollo scowls at him, threatening.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
But the outcome would have been the  
same.

**BACK TO SCENE**

Midas is shocked, touching his ears, faltering in the woods.

Pan is still dancing, unaware of what's happening around him.

PAN  
It didn't go as all the other music  
contests. No speechlessness, no  
tears. It's all fine.

Midas fondles some trees, desperate for his ears, crying and  
staggering between the bushes.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
King Midas has always been a man  
with no equilibrium, but that was  
not the biggest misfortune that his  
ears had to deal with.

Midas stumbles desperately in the hazy wood, showing the  
tragedy of his situation.

He grabs his ears, falls to his knees, weeping.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
He will be judged by many.

**TO BE CONTINUED**



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" King Midas :  
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(part 2)

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FADE IN:

**PROFESSOR'S TALKING HEAD, DESK**

RURNCOFFER looks tired.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER  
So, anyway, after his eerie  
misfortune--

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

MIDAS bawls his eyes out over his donkey ears.

**INT. GREEK PALACE, EMPTY MARBLED ROOM - DAY**

Midas sits on the floor.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
King Midas shut himself in a palace  
trying to disguise his unfortunate  
look.

He walks around wearing a big, purple turban, but it's so flashy that SERVANTS keep staring at him.

He tries on a helmet, some bulky scarves and a headdress made of leaves, but they are all too big.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Then, as a miracle, he found what  
he was looking for.

In awe, he sees a small tiara, shining with unnatural light. Behind him a statue of himself with a tear lining his cheek.

He slowly puts on the tiara, flattening the ears, satisfied. They are still very much visible under the simple jewel.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Other translations say he went for  
the turban.

**EXT. CITY - DAY**

Midas strolls with his tiara on, unnoticed.

**EXT. WOOD - DAY**

Midas is playing and idling with Pan. Relaxed.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Midas' ears flap under the tiara.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
King Midas is happy again. No one  
will ever notice his disgrace.

A WELL-DRESSED WOMAN and a YOUNGER WOMAN see him walking by.

YOUNGER WOMAN  
What's wrong with his head?

WELL-DRESSED WOMAN  
What?

YOUNGER WOMAN  
That thing on his head. Are those  
furry ears!?

WELL-DRESSED WOMAN  
A tiara.

YOUNGER WOMAN  
No, not that. Horrible taste but--  
you don't see that?! Maybe it's a  
high-end headband with ears?!

WELL-DRESSED WOMAN  
Uh?

She looks around. No one else pays attention to Midas.

YOUNGER WOMAN  
My eyes aren't racist, right? I'm  
actually seeing a donkey king.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
Yes, ma'am, that man is now a  
walking stereotype.

YOUNGER WOMAN  
Good. At least we can still make  
some assumptions.

WELL-DRESSED WOMAN  
What are you talking about?

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
But joy is not supposed to last.

**INT. GREEK PALACE - WEEKS LATER**

A long-haired, tiara-concealed Midas wanders desperate in a big marbled room, screaming to the ceiling.

MIDAS

My ruin has come! This is worse  
than swimming in gold!

He sobs loudly, acting very theatrical.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

Until the 20th century it was  
common practice to complain out  
loud about your own misery in an  
empty, marbled room. See the many  
bad performances of Shakespeare, La  
Traviata or Sophocles' Elektra.

He curls up on the floor, swinging back and forth. Now the same statue of Midas has a weirder, longer hairdo.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

What was also common was to need a  
haircut every now and then.

He grabs his head and slowly strokes his hair.

MIDAS

How can I live with long hair? Just  
appalling, dangling appendages!

(crying)

What can I do? My subjects can't  
see this hairdo!

He slithers face down on the floor, agonizing.

MIDAS (CONT'D)

These are not my hair!

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

They were.

A WOMAN enters, passing in front of him distractedly.

MIDAS

Don't you look at me!

WOMAN

Why would I do that on purpose?

MIDAS

Do not pay attention to my misery!

He covers his face. The woman, already far from him, shrugs.

MIDAS (CONT'D)

Nobody look!

She goes away, shaking her head. The statue now faces the wall. He swings and weeps in a fetal position, then screams at the top of his lungs.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

I understand the ears' problem, but he was a bit overreacting.

His annoying groan resounds in other rooms.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Right now we would have benefit from Aristotle's starving version.

MIDAS

A King can't have long hair. No one has the time to sculpt a statue like that. AAAAAH!

The back of the statue is unfinished. He stands up, puts the tiara back on and runs off with his robes floating with him.

**INT. EMPTY BARBER SHOP - NIGHT**

It's very dark outside. Tensely quiet. There are only Midas and an untroubled BARBER.

Midas sits down and slowly takes off his tiara. Only then the barber notices the ears, immediately holding back his shock.

The two stare at each other.

MIDAS

This has to remain a secret... Or you'll be killed.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

Straight to murder! Never heard of proportionality of punishment?

He turns the chair around, giving his back to the barber. Like the statue, his hair are also 'unfinished' in the back.

BARBER

So this is why you came here at this hour, when empty and dark.

He points at a sundial in the dark.

MIDAS  
I trust you blindly.

They scrutinize each other in silence, barely seeing.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
Why people are ashamed of something  
that is not their fault or choice  
will never be explained.

The barber puts an extremely short cape on Midas, then waits.

BARBER  
(under his breath, turning  
to the camera)  
I don't have the license to trim  
ear hair.

Midas looks impatient. The barber's scared.

BARBER (CONT'D)  
You don't have to worry, Sire, I'm  
not a doctor but a lot of people  
seem to have ears... My King, now  
what am I supposed to do with  
these?

MIDAS  
Just cut my hair to disguise these  
things.

BARBER  
Of course. Of course.

He bows, picks up a knife menacingly, but stops immediately.

MIDAS  
Chop-chop! Time is money!

BARBER  
I'm not paid by the hour. But how  
can I hide anything, by cutting  
shorter what covers it?

Midas slowly turns to face the barber.

No answer. Silence.

BARBER (CONT'D)  
Of course.

He bows again and sharpens his knife.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
 We've always had unintelligible  
 requests to hairdressers and they  
 have to do something about it...  
 somehow.

**BARBER TALKING HEAD**

He's holding the knife, looking like a murderer in the dark.

BARBER  
 (creepily)  
 And we might not even had scissors  
 back then! The oldest one found  
 dates back to 400 years from now.

**INT. BARBER SHOP - LATER**

Midas puts the tiara back on, standing up happy. As is to be expected, his donkey ears are more visible than before.

The barber holds the knife as if expecting to be attacked.

MIDAS  
 That's perfect.

The barber sighs, holstering the knife. Midas admires his reflection in a water bucket.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
 Look at the source of all his  
 problems.

MIDAS  
 I love it! I love myself. My trip  
 ends here.

BARBER  
 No more power trip.  
 (looks outside)  
 Shall I call you a chariot?

MIDAS  
 Shall I call you a genius?

BARBER  
 No.

MIDAS  
 (still admiring himself)  
 Well, I have to. This is wonderful.



BARBER

Do you need a ride back to your  
palace? A horse? A donkey maybe?

Midas' eyes widen at the word donkey. The atmosphere changes  
as Midas shows his might again.

MIDAS

You won't tell anyone about this!

His ears flap repeatedly against his head as he yells. The  
barber nods, scared, slowly pulling out the knife.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

His friend is half goat, what's the  
problem with two well functioning  
ass ears?

BARBER

I'll try.

MIDAS

Try? I'm gonna try not to kill you,  
if we're now speaking in attempts.

BARBER

I will hold my tongue...  
(whispers)  
And knife, if you threaten me.

MIDAS

I'll know if you won't.

### **MONTAGE - VARIOUS**

Midas relaxes walking his reign, calming music all around.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

King Midas kept his ears to the  
ground, but no one seemed to be  
aware of anything. He was able to  
enjoy a peaceful life once again.

Midas lies on the lawn, Pan plays. Both at peace.

MIDAS

That is a very good song!

PAN

Thanks, but said by you doesn't  
mean much.

### **END OF MONTAGE**

**EXT. STREET, MARKET - DAY**

Full of people, many protesting against Midas' regime. The barber hastens, tightening his lips. People keep hitting him.

He acts visibly worried, too worried.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
But the barber couldn't keep that secret any longer. It became an unbearable load.

BARBER  
It became an unbearable load, I can't keep that secret any longer. King ass?! It writes itself.

A PASSER-BY turns around.

PASSER-BY  
Uh?

The barber looks in every possible direction, trying to cover his mouth, but bumps into an ACTIVIST who hands out leaflets.

ACTIVIST  
Do you have something to say against slav-- ?

BARBER  
Nothing to say to anybody. No information at all.

ACTIVIST  
You've never heard of slavery? Look around you, everyone is complicit!

Midas shakes him off but he grabs his arm.

ACTIVIST (CONT'D)  
Slavery! Why is nobody talking about that?!

BARBER  
I am mute!

ACTIVIST  
Yeah, that's the problem.

The barber runs away but the man keeps screaming at him.

ACTIVIST (CONT'D)  
Phrygia's citizens only care about gold!

A young WOMAN approaches Midas handing another leaflet.

**INSERT** - the leaflet reads :

*"Do you want to go to a better place?"*

He goes from concerned to pleasantly interested.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
That wasn't another threat, just an  
add for some random holiday  
destination.

BARBER  
I have enough gold to do that!

**INT. BARBER'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

The barber prepares a bag with clothes and food, then fits it inside another suitcase and closes it, sighing. He takes a jacket from a built-in closet, looking around his house, then puts the suitcase inside the closet and goes away.

**EXT. BARBER SHOP - NIGHT**

He turns around a sign saying 'Going out for business'.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
And thus, as in any epic tale, he  
found a way to get rid of his  
secret without telling anyone.

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

He walks fast, closing his jacket, running away.

**EXT. SMALL SHODDY INN - NIGHT**

It's just a place on the road. There is nothing around, only darkness and fog.

**INT. SMALL SHODDY INN - NIGHT**

The barber enters trying to not be seen. People wander in it without any purpose or vitality, one weirder than the other.

The ELDER OWNER approaches him, wearing a short chiton.

ELDER OWNER

Welcome.

BARBER

Hello, oh landlord.

A CRASS WOMAN interrupts them from nowhere.

CRASS WOMAN

Oh man with hair that bear some  
resemblance to seaweeds, are you  
the fortune-teller who sees omens  
by staring at some cheese?

Silence.

The barber's confused.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

That routine question was actually  
expressed in Greek with just three  
words at that time.

Both the woman and the owner are waiting for his answer.

BARBER

No.

ELDER OWNER

Then, do you want to sojourn in our  
nice place for the night?

The place looks horrible.

BARBER

I'm in an inn, innit?

ELDER OWNER

In it, indeed. Then do you have  
something to give me in exchange?  
Food? Clothes? A bed? A breakfast?

The barber thinks about it.

He puts his bag on the floor and reaches his pocket. He pulls  
out a stone, some food, singular crumbs, then a small cruet.  
The owner isn't interested.

He finds some golden coins. They both look at them for a bit,  
then shake their heads. He puts them back in his dress.

He looks in the other pocket, reverses it backward, empty.

He looks around, getting worried.

The crass woman frowns at him in an off-putting way.

He remembers. In another internal pocket there's a rolled piece of paper. He opens it, looks at both sides, puts it near his face, scrutinizing it carefully. Then he rolls it up and slips it back into his pocket.

He looks up.

BARBER

No.

They tensely stare at each other.

OLD OWNER

It's fine anyway.

BARBER

Great.

OLD OWNER

Company and some funny anecdote  
will pay for your stay.

The barber's mouth snaps shut. Scared.

BARBER

I have nothing to say! I choose the  
quiet mode, I just need to sleep  
here for the night without paying.

OLD OWNER

Talking never hurt anyone.

CRASS WOMAN

No one with a functional throat. Is  
yours alright?

BARBER

There's nothing in my brain that  
can be said. Not at this hour.

He glances back at the camera, mouths a worried 'fuck', then  
shuts his mouth even tighter, running upstairs.

OLD OWNER

Ok, man with hair that that bear  
some resemblance to seaweeds, we  
will chat in a low voice without  
following any rhythm nor melody.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)

This, instead, was said using five  
words. Two were needed to say 'ok'.

**EXT. QUIET GRASSLAND, SWAMPY LAKE - EARLY MORNING**

Beautiful grassy plain.

The barber walks to a lake. He bandaged his mouth not to speak. He keeps looking in every direction. There's no one, nothing, just silence.

He runs fast to the lake, losing things from his pockets.

Reached the edge of the lake, he falls on his knees from joy.

He furiously digs a small hole in the ground with both hands, then admires it, smiling.

He looks around again, afraid. Then leans over, with his face above the hole, fully in the mud.

BARBER  
(whispers)  
King Midas is an ass.

He rapidly covers the hole, using hands and feet, making a mess. He jumps up, letting out liberating screams and laughs.

He runs away, hopping around, laughing hysterically.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.)  
Even then people were happy knowing  
that a pile of loam cannot speak.

**MONTAGE**

- TIME PASSES. In that exact spot some reeds start to grow.

- Those reeds become a cane field that makes resound the barber's words, increasing volume. *King Midas is an ass. King Midas iiis aaass. King Midas iiiissaass. King Midas earssass.*

- That whispered sound spreads between the canes to the trees and then among people. Changing. *King Midas ears ass. King Midas ears has. King Midas hears.*

- WOODS. Pan hears those voices and checks if they are coming from his flute.

- LOCAL FAIR. Midas is calmly eating among his subjects, even if behind him people are still protesting him. Activists hold signs saying 'That ass of King Midas only cares about gold', 'Midas makes me work/ like a mule' and 'Hang Midas like a donkey'. Then the whispered sentences '*King Midas hears us asses. King Midas has ass ears. King Midas hears he has ass ears*' reaches him. He shivers. People laugh.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And so it was. Unfortunately who transmits these kind of myths didn't care about secondary roles. So we don't know what happened to the barber after that. However, I think it's interesting to see a man who tries to do his best and-- Well, yeah, ok, he was probably killed in some painful, horrific way... that's what the Greeks would have gone for.

- The barber walks serene in a green, peaceful panorama, smiling excessively, followed by the whispered, singing melody 'Ass earsss. He's here. Ass earsss. He has ass ears. He has an ass and ears. He has an ass and two long, furry donkey ears'.

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Perhaps his guts have been eaten by snakes. He's been decapitated by a lightning, rambling around like a headless lizard. Or he died with a thousand needles in his cranium, after getting into a scuffle with Athena in form of an owl. We have no knowledge of that, but use your atrocious, truculent imagination. Let Aristotle inspire you.

- The barber smiles happily.

**END OF THE MONTAGE**

**PROFESSOR'S TALKING HEAD, DESK**

PROFESSOR RURNCOFFER

Sadly, that's it for today. Think about it in the coming days, it might brighten them. We will meet again next week.

FADE TO BLACK

Scraping noises of many people dragging chairs on the floor.

**END OF THE EPISODE**