



Nothing New under the Sun

(Sample myth play by Anna J. Small Roseboro)

1. *Greek tale selected: Apollo and Phaeton*
2. *Audience, when reading or viewing play should*
 - *Think: Myth tales are about human behavior seen today*
 - *Feel: Fathers know best*
 - *Know: Children seldom listen to their fathers*
3. *Scenario: Modern 16 year old boy wants to drive his father's sports car against the advice of father, who then relates to the son the tale of Apollo and Phaeton*

Cast of Characters

Father

Son (about 16 years old)

Apollo, the Sun-god

Phaeton, his son (about 16 years old)

SCENE ONE

Modern day. Dad is sitting in comfortable chair reading the newspaper.

Greek myth textbook is in view. Son enters the room.

Son: Dad, can I use the car tonight? You promised I could drive the next time me and the guys went to the beach.

Dad: (absently) Yeah, son. You can drive.

Son: I can drive the new car?

Dad: (Still distracted by paper). Yeah, son. I promised didn't I?

Son: (elated) Awright!!! I'll be hot tonight! They'll never believe it. My Dad's new Ferrari! Whoa! Stick shift, too! Rrrmmbb! (pantomiming shifting gears, prancing around the stage).

Dad: (Alert now, putting down the paper.) What? ... What're you talking about? My Ferrari? You gotta be kidding. I meant the Ford Festiva. You can use the new Festiva I just got for you and your sister.

Son: But, Dad. You said...

Dad: That Ferrari is too powerful!. You wouldn't be able to handle those curves going down to the beach....

Son: But Dad. You promised. You'd never go back on your word, would you? You always say that a man's word is his bond... it's all he has. Dad, YOU PROMISED!

Dad: (Noticing the myth book, picks it up and flips through the pages.) Son, this myth here, the one about Apollo and Phaeton, is a story about a father and son in a situation much like ours. Maybe this tale will help you understand why I can't let you drive my Ferrari. Maybe then you'll see that, like Apollo, I know what's best for my son. Listen.

Son: Ah, Dad. I don't have time to think about school stuff now. Anyway, it's the weekend. The guys are waiting and you promised I could drive today.... Oh, awright. ...I see you're gonna make me listen before you give me the keys.

END OF SCENE ONE

SCENE TWO

Time of Greek gods. Apollo is seated on golden throne, surrounded by bright golden light, almost blindingly brilliant. Phaeton enters, shading his eyes with his hands.

Apollo: Well Phaeton. Come on in. What's on your mind?

Phaet: Apollo, sir. The guys at school don't believe you're my dad. You know... because you're a god. .Mom says I'm your son, but when I tell the guys at school, they just laugh. I want to know from you. Are you really my dad?

Apollo: Sure, son. Your mom, Cylene, is right. I really am your father. Call me, Dad. It's just that my job requires me to travel a lot and I just don't get to see you as much as I'd like.
... Say, I'll prove I'm your father. Ask me for anything. Anything you want and I promise by the River Styx, I'll grant you your wish.

Phaet: Really.... (hesitantly)...Dad? Anything?

Apollo: Sure, son. You know a promise sworn on the River Styx cannot be broken.

Phaet: O.K....Dad. d'you know what I'd like more than anything else in the world?

Apollo: Anything, son. You name it and it's yours.

Phaet: Um...Dad...I want to drive your sun-chariot today.When my friends see me in that golden car, they'll believe me then. That'll show those guys that I'm really the son of Apollo, the Sun-god. Yeah!! I'll look great!. I can see me now (cavorting around). Fast –up the eastern arc, zooming past all those monsters, right across the sky. It'll be rad! Swooping down the western slope..... WOW!

Apollo: Hold it, son! I can't let you do that. Those horses are too powerful! You could never control them on those rising slopes and setting arcs. And the monsters, the Crab, Scorpions, and the others Son, Leo, the lion, isn't a pussycat! Those constellations aren't called monsters for nothing. Please, Phaeton, reconsider that request. Isn't there something else, less dangerous, you want? Make another wish, son.

Phaet: No, Dad. This is what I really want. Anyway, you swore by the River Styx. You have to keep your word.

Apollo: You've got me there, son. But listen. You've got to show those horses who's boss. Don't let them get off course or there'll be irreparable damage all over the world.

Phaet: Ah, Dad. I can control those horses. No sweat. I've driven before. Come on. It's nearly time for sun rise. I can hardly wait. This'll show those guys who I am. They won't dare call me those names again. Come on, Dad. Let's break day!

They exit stage left.

END OF SCENE TWO

SCENE THREE

Modern day. Setting same as Scene One

Dad: You know the rest, son. Phaeton nearly destroyed the earth with those fiery horses. When those monsters frightened him, Phaeton lost control and let go of the reins. The chariot went way off course. It went so high that some parts of the earth froze and glaciers formed; it dipped so low in other places that the earth scorched and deserts formed. Uncontrollable fires broke out and caused so much devastation that Demeter, the earth goddess, begged Zeus to intervene!

Son: Yeah, and I bet Zeus hurled his lightning bolts and started rain showers to put out the fires.

Dad: That's about it, son. But, one of those bolts struck Phaeton. He fell out of the chariot and into a river. The river nymphs buried him and put some lines of poetry on his tombstone....uhm... let's me see. It's here in your book. Oh... here it is ...

Here lies Phaeton who drove the sun god's car

Greatly he failed but he had greatly dared.

So you see, son, children who ignore their parents' advice come to no good end.

Son: Yeah, Dad, but at least Apollo gave his son a chance. I still want to drive to Ferrari. I'll be careful. Really, Dad. You know a kid can learn lessons from his school books sometime. I'll be careful. I promise.

Dad: Well, you've got me there son. I guess parents can learn from lessons from literature, too. You're right. I did promise. Here're the keys. And please, son, respect the power of that car. I don't want to be weeping for you like Apollo did for Phaeton.

[Son grabs the keys and rushes off STAGE LEFT. Sound of screeching tire wheels peeling out of the driveway.]

Dad: (holding and shaking his head.) I guess there's nothing new under the sun.

THE END

