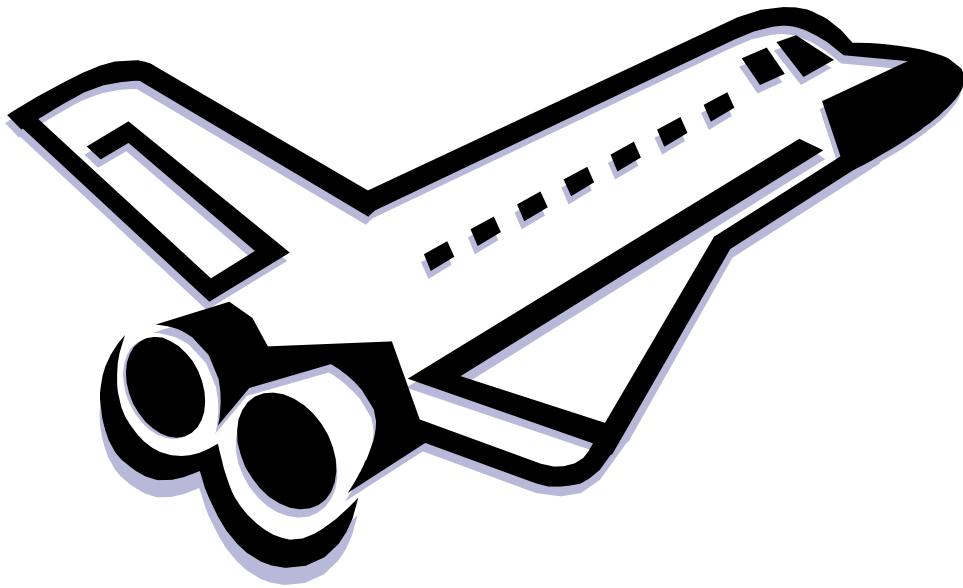


Collision Course



*a play about forces and motion
(and saving the world)*

by

Nick McIvor

COLLISION COURSE – CAST LIST

CHARACTER	GENDER
ZEUS	Male
HERA	Female
APHRODITE	Female
ATHENA	Female
GALILEO	Male
NEWTON	Male
CAPTAIN FORRESTER	either
SCIENCE OFFICER SMART	either
SECURITY OFFICER LAW	either
ENSIGN SMITH	either
KEVIN	Male
CREW 1	either
CREW 2	either
CREW 3	either
CREW 4	either
CREW 5	either

THE GODS 1

ZEUS ENTERS AND BEGINS INTRODUCING HIMSELF

ZEUS Hello, how do you do, I'm Zeus, king of the Gods, ruler of the sky and so on and so forth... how do you do... how do you do... what's your name?
(WAIT FOR ANSWER)
And are you human?
(YES)
Bad luck. Still, can't have everything, unless you're me, of course, which you aren't because... well, I am.
So, a bit about myself: as I've said, I am Zeus, I live on Mount Olympus, I'm King of the Gods and I am therefore the most powerful being on Earth.
Pretty impressive, eh?
The thing is, I retired a while back and I'm a bit out of touch, so could anyone tell me what's been going on for the last 2000 years?

HERA ENTERS

HERA What are you doing?

ZEUS Hera, dearest. How nice to to see you.

HERA What are you doing?

ZEUS Oh...just out for a bit of a walk.

HERA (SEES AUDIENCE) Have you been talking to them?

ZEUS Would I do a thing like that?

HERA Zeus, we've been married 3000 years, now just tell me.

ZEUS No, never said a word.

HERA (TO AUDIENCE) Has he been talking to you?

 ZEUS FRANTICALLY SIGNALS AT THE AUDIENCE TO SAY NO.

HERA You have, haven't you?

ZEUS Well why shouldn't I?

HERA Because it's interfering!

ZEUS It's not, it's just chatting.

HERA The last time you had a chat with a human being, a war broke out.

ZEUS That wasn't my fault!

HERA Yes it was – you told them to fight it.

ZEUS Well, I may have suggested it...

HERA That's your trouble, Zeus. You never chat, you tell people what to do.

ZEUS Well, why shouldn't I? I'm King of the Gods aren't I?

HERA You were King of the Gods, Zeus, that was 2000 years ago, things have changed.

ZEUS But I can still do thunderbolts. Look at this.

 ZEUS POINTS. THERE IS A FEEBLE BOOM.

ZEUS All right, so I'm a bit out of practice.

HERA Zeus, this is silly. Now come back to Olympus.

ZEUS But it's boring.

HERA Zeus!

ZEUS All right, all right, I'm coming.

 THEY GO.

THE SPACESHIP 1

SCIENTIST (SMART) ENTERS. SHE IS MAKING NOTES ON A CLIPBOARD. THE RATHER BUMPTIOUS SECURITY CHIEF – LAW – ENTERS.

LAW Lieutenant Smart. I need to talk to you!

SMART Commander Law, how nice to see you.

LAW What are you up to, Smart?

SMART Well, at the moment, I'm writing lots of numbers on this bit of paper. See?

LAW Don't get clever with me, Lieutenant.

SMART Sorry, Ma'am.

LAW Just remember who the senior officer is here.

SMART How could I forget?

LAW You're hiding something, and I intend to find out what.

SMART And you will....

LAW You'd better believe it.

SMARTin about half an hour.

LAW Right... (REALISING WHAT HAS BEEN SAID) ...I beg your pardon?

SMART In half an hour we'll be explaining our secret mission to the whole crew.

LAW What secret mission?

SMART Ssssh! It's a secret.

LAW But not from me! I'm head of security.

SMART Sorry, orders.

LAW This is outrageous!

CAPTAIN FORRESTER ENTERS. LAW SNAPS TO ATTENTION.

FORRESTER (TO SMART) Smart!

SMART Captain.

FORRESTER Are we all set?

SMART I think so.

FORRESTER Let's go, then.

LAW Permission to speak, Captain!

FORRESTER Is it important?

LAW Lieutenant Smart says we're on a secret mission.

FORRESTER That's right

LAW You knew?

FORRESTER Well, of course I did, it's my ship! Now, come on. I have to brief the crew in... (LOOKING AT WATCH) Twenty-five minutes.

LAW So what is it?

FORRESTER What's what?

LAW Our secret mission

FORRESTER Haven't you been listening? We're about to brief the whole crew.

LAW Well, I realise that, Captain, I just thought that as Second in Command and Chief Security Officer I ought to know first.

FORRESTER (EXASPERATED) Oh, tell her Smart.

SMART There's a meteor heading for Earth. We have to blow it up.

LAW With a bomb?

FORRESTER No, a bicycle pump. Look, we need to go.

LAW (TO SMART) Are you telling me we're carrying a bomb?

SMART Oh, not just one. We've got a hold full of them.

LAW I should have been told!

FORRESTER Commander?

LAW Yes, Captain?

FORRESTER There's a load of bombs in the hold.

LAW Very good, Captain.

FORRESTER Now, let's go to this briefing.

THEY GO

THE GODS 2

APHRODITE ENTERS

APHRODITE

I am Aphrodite, Goddess of beauty and love, protector of sailors, retired.

SHE GOES TO A PUPIL

What do you want to do when you grow up?

APHRODITE

That sounds fun. Most things do. I don't get out much these days.

According to Hera, Zeus is planning a little adventure. Of course I wouldn't dream of getting involved. It would be utterly irresponsible. And I never liked Zeus anyway – so pompous. Oh, here he comes now.

ATHENA ENTERS. ZEUS JOINS HER.

ZEUS

Athena, how nice to see you.

ATHENA

Hi, Dad.

ZEUS

What are you up to these days?

ATHENA

Nothing much.

ZEUS

Oh dear.

ATHENA

Why 'oh dear'?

ZEUS

You're a free spirit, Athena. It's not good for you to be wandering about Olympus with nothing to do.

ATHENA

I know what you're going to say, Dad, the answer's no.

ZEUS

What are you talking about?

ATHENA

I've been talking to Mum. She said I wasn't to get involved in any of your hare-brained schemes

ZEUS

She said I was hare-brained!

ATHENA

Well, no, she wasn't actually that polite.

ZEUS

Athena, you're three thousand years old. Your mother's got no business telling you what to do.

THE SPACESHIP 2

KEVIN IS POLISHING THE FLOOR

APHRODITE Voyager, I have come to warn you.

KEVIN Just a minute.

KEVIN FINISHES

KEVIN Sorry about that. What were you saying?

APHRODITE Great peril lies ahead.

KEVIN Oh... (PAUSE. HE IS CONFUSED)what?

APHRODITE There is danger, Zeus walks the skies once more.

KEVIN Oh, and does he have really dirty feet, then?

APHRODITE What?

KEVIN I'm the executive officer for health and hygiene, you see, and if this.... what was the name again?

APHRODITE Zeus!

KEVIN Zeus is a bit of a mucky pup that could be a real problem.

APHRODITE Zeus is no pup, he is the mighty sky god: ruler of Olympus.

KEVIN No, you've lost me.

APHRODITE The great God Zeus would divert you from your course. You must beware.

KEVIN Hang on, who are you?

APHRODITE I am Aphrodite, goddess of love, protector of sailors...

KEVIN How did you get on board?

APHRODITE I just came. I can do that sort of thing. I'm a god.

KEVIN Where from?

APHRODITE From Olympus.

SPACESHIP 3

CREW APPROACH FROM VARIOUS DIRECTIONS.
THEY ARE MUTTERING ABOUT ‘ SECRET
MISSIONS’ ETC.

LAW Quiet everyone. Quiet! Let the captain speak.

FORRESTER Thank you, Commander. Now, I realise there are a lot of rumours going round at the moment. So I just wanted to clear things up – yes, it’s true, we are on a secret mission.

THE CREW REACT

LAW Settle down! Settle down.

FORRESTER Lieutenant, perhaps you could explain.

SMART Thank you. Now, as you all know, the earth goes round the sun....

LAW And takes exactly one year to complete the journey.

SMART Very good, Commander, go to the top of the class. What you may not know be aware of is quite how much other stuff goes round the sun – comets, asteroids and so on. Now, to make this a bit clearer let’s have you as the sun, you as the earth and you as a lump of rock...

ENSIGN SMITH Well, thanks a bunch.

SMART So, if the sun could just stand over there and earth starts going round it...

THE SUN (CREW 2) AND THE EARTH (CREW 1)
MOVE

SMART And if the lump of rock would come over here

THE SUN GETS INTO POSITION. LUMP OF ROCK
GOES TO SMART

SMART Now, I want you to go round the sun too, but I want your orbit to be very eccentric.

LUMP OF ROCK You mean a bit mad. All right. Yeeeeahhhh...

LUMP OF ROCK STARTS LEAPING ROUND THE
SUN MAKING SILLY NOISES.

SMART Ensign Smith! Ensign Smith! I didn't mean that. When I said your orbit is eccentric, I mean it's very long and thin.

LUMP OF ROCK I think it's more fun my way.

SMART Yes, but it's wrong. So, I want you to start here, walk straight towards the sun, nip round behind it, then come back.

LUMP OF ROCK All right.

THE DEMONSTRATION RUNS DURING THE NEXT BIT OF DIALOGUE

SMART So you can see the Earth going round the sun in more or less a circle, and the lump of rock...

LUMP OF ROCK Hi!

SMART Taking a much longer, narrower route.

CREW 1 What's the point of all this?

SMART I'm just coming to that. Can we speed things up a bit please.

THE MODEL STARTS GOING FASTER.

SUN What do I do?

SMART Just shine.

THE LUMP OF ROCK BUMPS INTO THE EARTH

EARTH Mind where you're going!

LUMP OF ROCK Sorry.

EARTH (TO SMART) He just barged straight into me.

SMART Exactly.

EARTH What, you mean he was supposed to?

SMART I mean, that's what'll be happening to the earth 6 months from now.

CREW 2 A lump of rock's going to bump into it?

KEVIN I just met one on the cargo deck. She said she was a god, but I wasn't fooled – she was an alien and would have sucked my brains out if I'd stayed a minute longer.

ALARM GOES OFF

CREW RUN TO THEIR STATIONS

CAPTAIN What's happening?

KEVIN I told you, it's aliens!

CREW 4 It looks like another asteroid and it's heading straight for us.

CAPTAIN Evasive action.

THE CREW ARE THROWN ABOUT THE DECK.

CREW 4 We've got another one coming at us from the port side.

SMART (INCREDULOUS) Another one?

CAPTAIN Hard starboard.

CREW 4 Another... another.

SMART The chances of this happening are one in a billion.

CAPTAIN Well, it's happening. Maximum thrust all engines, let's get out of here.

CREW 4 Another one coming right at us. Brace yourselves!

APHRODITE Zeus!

A LOUD EXPLOSION. THE STAGE CLEARS

HERA Oh didn't you? (APHRODITE) Tell them Aphrodite.

APHRODITE I tarried long upon that craft and felt a mighty quaking as the missiles struck.

HERA Oh for heavens' sake talk properly.

APHRODITE Sorry. I was on the ship when the rocks hit. It seems that some machine called 'engine' is damaged, and they have no way to propel themselves.

ZEUS Haven't these people heard of oars?

HRA Shut up and listen!

APHRODITE Now the ship is drifting, helpless in space, and unable to complete its mission.

ATHENA Which is?

APHRODITE To save the Earth.

ZEUS What did you say?

HERA To save the earth, you idiot! Thanks to your little bit of fun, the entire world is about to be destroyed, including Mount Olympus.

ZEUS Oops!

ATHENA Isn't there something we can do?

APHRODITE We could try to stop the asteroid.

ZEUS The what?

APHRODITE The big rock that's heading for earth.

ZEUS Oh, well, we're good at rocks, aren't we Athena?

HERA Not funny.

ZEUS Sorry.

HERA I suggest you, me and Athena try to find this rock. Aphrodite, you go back to the ship and see what else you can find out. We'll meet again tomorrow.

THE GODS GO

SPACESHIP 4

KEVIN IS CLEANING THE FLOOR WITH A MOP AND BUCKET.

APHRODITE ENTERS.

APHRODITE Right, let's see who's about

KEVIN (SEEING HER) Aaaaaah!

APHRODITE Oh no, I forgot!

KEVIN Aliens! Aliens!

KEVIN RUNS OFF.

APHRODITE (SHE MAKES A GESTURE) Invisible!
I must remember to keep doing that.

APHRODITE PICKS UP KEVIN'S BROOM

APHRODITE So this is a space-age floor cleaner... (SHE HEARS
PEOPLE COMING). Oh!

APHRODITE PUTS THE BROOM DOWN IN A
DIFFERENT PLACE.

KEVIN, CREW 3 AND CREW 5 RUN IN.

CREW 3 Where are they?

THEY DO A QUICK SEARCH

CREW 3 What exactly did you see, Kevin?

KEVIN An alien. Just like before.

CREW 5 No one else saw that one either.

KEVIN (SEES HIS MOP) Oh! The mop.

CREW 3 What about it?

KEVIN I didn't leave it there. It's moved!

APHRODITE Bother!

CREW 5 Hey, you know what this means?

KEVIN Aliens!

CREW 5 Worse – we’ve got a haunted floor-mop! Help, it’s fighting with me.

CREW 5 FAKES WRESTLING WITH THE MOP.

CREW 5 It’s no good, it’s too strong.

CREW 5 THROWS THE MOP TOWARDS THE BUCKET. IT HITS THE BUCKET. CREW 3 STARES AT IT.

KEVIN You think I’m being stupid, don’t you.

CREW 5 No, I don’t think you’re *being* stupid. I think you *are* stupid.

CREW 3 I’ve got it!

CREW 5 Got what?

CREW 3 I know how we can stop the spaceship.

CREW 3 PICKS UP THE MOP.

CREW 5 You’re going to use a mop?

CREW 3 No, no. This is our ship and it’s racing towards the edge of the solar system with nothing to stop it.

CREW 5 Yeah.

CREW 3 Now, Galileo said that any moving object will carry on in a straight line forever, unless a force acts on it.

CREW 3 CARRIES THE MOP LIKE A SPACE ROCKET.

KEVIN What?

CREW 3 To stop this ship flying out the solar system, we need some kind of force to stop it. Now watch.

CREW 3 THROWS THE MOP TOWARDS THE BUCKET.

CREW 3 The mop didn’t keep going forever, did it?

KEVIN That’s ‘cos it hit the bucket.

CREW 3 Exactly!

CREW 5 So what you're saying is, we need to find a giant bucket in space and fly into it.

CREW 3 Well, not a bucket, obviously.

CREW 5 What then, a garden shed, a wheelbarrow?

CREW 3 A planet! We need to fly towards a planet.

CREW 5 And crash into it?

CREW 3 I admit, the plan needs a bit of work.

CREW 5 It's impossible!

CREW 3 It's worth a try.

CREW 5 Even if we could find a giant bucket...

CREW 3 A planet!

CREW 5 Whatever. We still couldn't land on it.

CREW 3 Why not?

CREW 5 Because we'd have to change direction, and to do that we'd need a force.

CREW 3 We use a quick blast of the rocket motor.

CREW 5 We haven't got a rocket motor!

CREW 3 Oh. Yeah.

 CREW 5 TAKES THE MOP FROM CREW 3 AND OFFERS IT TO KEVIN.

CREW 5 Now I'm sure Kevin's got a lot of work to do.

 KEVIN TAKES THE MOP

CREW 5 Come on.

 CREW 3 AND CREW 5 START TO GO

CREW 3 Sorry.

CREW 5 You never got your science officer exams, did you?

CREW 3 No.

APHRODITE Galileo!

KEVIN Who said that?

APHRODITE I must find this Galileo!

KEVIN It's you isn't it... The alien... you must be invisible...
Help...

APHRODITE AND KEVIN LEAVE

THE GODS 4

ZEUS, ATHENA AND HERA ENTER LOOKING TIRED.

HERA (TO ATHENA) Find anything?

ATHENA Nothing. This space thing is so empty. It's just lots of...

ZEUS Space.

ATHENA Exactly!

HERA Well, what did you expect?

ATHENA Lots of little stars and planets going round the earth in circles.

HERA Oh, please!

ATHENA Well that's what Aristotle always said it was like.

HERA Aristotle didn't know what he was talking about.

ZEUS Do you mind! Aristotle was the cleverest man in ancient Greece.

HERA That's right, in ancient Greece, two-and-a half-thousand years ago. According to Aristotle, there are no rocks in space.

ZEUS Maybe he was right.

HERA So what did you throw at the spaceship, Zeus?

ZEUS Well, maybe he got one or two things wrong, but he was a clever chap. He thought very highly of me.

HERA Need I say more. Now where's Aphrodite?

APHRODITE ENTERS, DRAGGING GALILEO.

APHRODITE Just coming. (TO GALILEO) Hurry up, will you!

HERA Who is this?

APHRODITE Galileo. I found him in the seventeenth century.

ZEUS A human!

APHRODITE A great scientist – he can tell us about the planets.

ZEUS You brought a human to Olympus?

HERA Oh stop whining, Zeus. If Aphrodite’s right he’ll be a lot more use than you.

ZEUS Hmph!

 ZEUS SULKS.

GALILEO Excuse me. What is this place?

HERA Mount Olympus, home to the gods of ancient Greece.

GALILEO But you don’t exist.

ATHENA How rude!

APHRODITE I know, these humans are so insensitive.

HERA We don’t have time for this bickering! Listen, Galileo, we need your help.

GALILEO Isn’t that just typical. The first time in my life I get some real recognition it’s from a bunch of mythological characters.

HERA That’s enough! Now we’ve lost something and you have to help us find it.

GALILEO What is it?

THE GODS (TOGETHER) A rock.

GALILEO A rock?

HERA A big one, and it’s heading for earth.

GALILEO And is it subject to any unbalanced forces?

HERA Is it what?

GALILEO Is anything pushing or pulling at it?

HERA I don’t know. (TO APHRODITE) Aphrodite?

APHRODITE Search me.

HERA Does this matter?

GALILEO Oh yes. You see if the forces are unbalanced, it will be speeding up or slowing down or perhaps changing direction, whereas, if the forces are balanced, it will be travelling at a steady speed in a perfectly straight line. (SELF-SATISFIED) That's one of my big ideas.

HERA Listen, Galileo, all we know is that this rock is heading for earth, and if it's as big as they say it is, it must be going pretty fast.

GALILEO (TRIUMPHANTLY) Wrong!

HERA I beg your pardon?

GALILEO That's my other big idea. You see everybody used to think that great big heavy things fall towards the ground faster than little light ones.

ATHENA Well, they do.

GALILEO No they don't, and I can prove it. Watch!

GALILEO GOES TO ZEUS' FRUIT BOWL AND TAKES A LARGE AND A SMALL PIECE OF FRUIT.

ZEUS Oy!

GALILEO This was my finest hour, when I took two cannonballs one large, one small, and took them to the top of the Leaning Tower of Pisa!

GALILEO STEPS ON TO A RAISED AREA OF THE STAGE

GALILEO "Now tell me," I said to crowds below, "if I drop these two objects at precisely the same moment, which will hit the ground first, the heavy one or the light one?"

ZEUS Well, the heavy one, obviously. Now give me my fruit back.

GALILEO And that's exactly what they said – except for the bit about the fruit, obviously – so I performed my experiment.

GALILEO DROPS THE FRUIT. OF COURSE THEY HIT THE GROUND AT THE SAME TIME.

APHRODITE They hit the ground at the same time!

GALILEO IS NOW IN FULL FLIGHT

GALILEO Precisely! Thus I have demonstrated my great principle that the speed at which an object falls has nothing to do with its weight!

HERA And how exactly does this help us?

GALILEO IS MORE SUBDUED

GALILEO It doesn't, really. I just fancied telling a god about my theories

HERA I'm losing patience! How do we find a rock in space?

GALILEO With a telescope.

HERA What's a telescope?

GALILEO An arrangement of lenses that focuses the light in such a way as to make objects appear closer.

HERA No, you've lost me. Have you got one?

GALILEO Yes.

HERA We'll take it.

GALILEO That's stealing.

APHRODITE No it's not, it's divine intervention. Now, what do we do with this telescope?

GALILEO You look through it and search the sky, for days...

APHRODITE Days?

GALILEO More likely weeks...

ATHENA Weeks?

GALILEO Perhaps months...

HERA Months!

GALILEO Because this 'lump of rock' has no light of its own, only what it reflects from the sun – it will be very faint.

HERA This is hopeless.

GALILEO Not hopeless, but hard, very hard. However, with patience, you will find your rock.

ATHENA And how do we stop it?

GALILEO Can't help you there.

HERA Galileo, has anyone ever told you that you're incredibly annoying.

GALILEO Oh, all the time. I ended up being arrested.

HERA (SARCASTIC) Well, there's a surprise.
Aphrodite, take him back and meet us at the spaceship.
It's plan B.

APHRODITE TAKES GALILEO AWAY

ATHENA What's plan B?

HERA If we can't stop this thing ourselves, we'll have to help these travellers do it.

ATHENA But we broke their ship.

HERA That's why we're going to help them fix it. Come on. You too Zeus.

ZEUS That little creep ruined my fruit.

THEY GO

THE SPACESHIP 5

CREW 2 IS STRUGGLING TO GET THE COVER OFF A LARGE PIECE OF EQUIPMENT. CREW 1 AND ENSIGN SMITH ARE WATCHING.

ENSIGN SMITH Kick it!

CREW 2 I can't kick it!

ENSIGN SMITH I will then.

ENSIGN SMITH GOES TO KICK IT. CREW 2 STOPS HIM.

CREW 2 You will not! This is an interplanetary rocket motor control module. A very delicate piece of equipment.

ENSIGN SMITH And it's busted!

CREW 2 (SARCASTICALLY) So kicking it's really going to help, isn't it?

CREW 2 STANDS UP

CREW 2 (TO CREW 1) Can you get that cover off?

CREW 1 GIVES IT A KICK. THE COVER FALLS OFF.

CREW 1 There you go.

CREW 2 LOOKS SHOCKED

ENSIGN SMITH Nothing to do with me.

CREW 2 CROUCHES DOWN TO LOOK INSIDE THE MODULE. THE OTHER TWO CROWD ROUND BEHIND HER. CREW 2 IS IRRITATED.

CREW 2 I need some space!

ENSIGN SMITH All right, all right, keep your hair on. It's just a load of wires, anyway.

CREW 2 WORKS

ZEUS, ATHENA AND HERA ENTER.

ZEUS I'll ask.

HERA No, wait...

ZEUS HURRIES ROUND BEHIND ENSIGN SMITH

SMART (TO CREW 2) Come on. We're going for a space-walk.

CREW 2 A space-walk! Isn't that dangerous?

SMART Not as dangerous as waiting around for the world to blow up. Now come on, we haven't got much time.

SMART AND CREW 2 START TO LEAVE. ZEUS STANDS BEHIND ENSIGN SMITH

ZEUS Where do we find Isaac Newton?

SMART In a graveyard. He died in 1727.

ZEUS Yes, but where?

SMART England! Now, I don't have time for these silly questions.

THE GODS LEAVE

ENSIGN SMITH I never said anything!

CREW 1 What do you want us to do?

SMART Nothing. You're good at that.

SMART AND CREW 2 GO.

ENSIGN SMITH I never said anything, I swear.

CREW 1 AND ENSIGN SMITH GO.

THE GODS 5

ZEUS AND HERA ENTER TOGETHER.

HERA Remember – I’ll do the talking.

ZEUS So, what do I do?

HERA Just stand there and look godlike.

ZEUS STRIKES AN IMPOSING POSTURE

ZEUS How’s this?

HERA (GIGGLES)

ZEUS Are you laughing at me?

HERA Don’t I always? Quiet, here they come.

ATHENA ENTERS FROM THE OPPOSITE SIDE
WITH ISAAC NEWTON

NEWTON This is outrageous. I demand an explanation!

ATHENA Silence, mortal!

HERA Are you Isaac Newton?

NEWTON (ANNOYED) I’m *Sir* Isaac Newton to you!

HERA Right, *Sir* Isaac Newton. We need to know about your third law of motion.

NEWTON (AMAZED) My third law of motion?

HERA Yes, and we’re in rather a hurry, so if you wouldn’t mind getting on with it.

NEWTON You mean to say I’ve been kidnapped so you could have a science lesson?

HERA Yes!

NEWTON This is insane. You’re all insane!

ZEUS Enough of this insolence!

HERA Oh, no don’t you start.

ZEUS Listen, mortal, and listen well. We are the mighty gods of Olympus and this is my realm. Behold!

ZEUS MAKES A DRAMATIC GESTURE.

THERE IS A FEEBLE POP.

ATHENA What was that?

HERA A thunderbolt.

ATHENA A what?

ZEUS All right, so I need to work on it.

HERA Zeus.

ZEUS Yes dear?

HERA Shut up.

ZEUS RETREATS TO HIS FRUIT BOWL

HERA Look at it this way, Sir Isaac. Whether we're gods or just plain nuts, you're not going home till you explain space travel to us.

NEWTON Space travel!

HERA Yes, and I wish you'd stop repeating what I say.

NEWTON But I thought you wanted to know about the third law of motion.

HERA It's all the same thing, isn't it?

NEWTON No.

HERA But it must be.

NEWTON Madam, I am the greatest scientist of my age, and I can assure you that my third law of motion is a well-attested fact, whereas space travel hasn't been invented yet.

THE GODS ALL LOOK DEJECTED

NEWTON Unless...

THE GODS ALL LOOK AT NEWTON EAGERLY

NEWTON Of course, this is all theoretical, but I suppose it could work if...

NEWTON GOES TO ZEUS AND TAKES HIS FRUIT BOWL

NEWTON Do you mind if I borrow this?

ZEUS Yes I do!

HERA No you don't! Carry on.

NEWTON The third law of motion says that if I push against something, it pushes back against me. For example, if I push against this orange...

NEWTON THROWS THE ORANGE AWAY

ZEUS Oy!

OTHER GODS Sssh!

NEWTON It flies off in that direction *and* – now here's the clever bit – I get a little push in the opposite direction.

ATHENA What?

NEWTON Look, imagine I'm standing on a great big sheet of ice and I want to move in that direction.

ATHENA You walk.

NEWTON Ah, but I can't – the ice is too slippery – so, what I do is take this orange and throw it as hard as I can in that direction...

NEWTON THROWS THE FRUIT

NEWTON And I start to slide in this direction....

NEWTON STARTS TO MOVE

NEWTON But only very slowly, so I throw another...

NEWTON THROWS ANOTHER PIECE OF FRUIT AND STARTS TO MOVE HIMSELF A LITTLE FASTER

NEWTON And another... and another...

NEWTON THROWS THE REST OF THE FRUIT.

NEWTON And with each piece I throw, I move a little bit faster,
until finally, I get to where I'm going.

NEWTON HANDS THE EMPTY BOWL BACK TO
ZEUS.

NEWTON (TO ZEUS) Thanks.
Now the same principle should work in space.

HERA You mean you'd just need someone at the back of the
spaceship throwing things off it.

NEWTON Exactly.

HERA AND ATHENA STARE AT ZEUS.

ZEUS What are you looking at me for?

HERA Athena – take Sir Isaac back where you found him. Zeus,
get some rocks. We've got a spaceship to move.

AS ATHENA & NEWTON GO, APHRODITE ENTERS

APHRODITE Have I missed anything?

HERA No, you're just in time

APHRODITE In time for what?

HERA To watch Zeus save the world.

ZEUS People keep nicking my fruit.

