

As Hephaestus was walking down Rhea Street on Mount Olympus, he noticed his wife, Aphrodite, kissing Hermes, the messenger-God, next to the area's one and only Burger God (very well-known for its char-broiled Whoppers). "Wait just a tootin' minute," he said aloud to himself. "Why is my wife kissing Hermes?" She is supposed to be devoted to me! "He was furious. It was very rare when Hephaestus became angry for any reason, so he was certain to have taken notice of his odd and unusual reaction. "I must settle this like a calm, rational person," he told himself at last. "This matter can very easily be resolved." He sighed. "I shall speak to her when she returns home. Until then, I am going to go home and rest a while—think things through. "And with that thought, Hephaestus made his way home, being absolutely sure not to look in the direction of the scene Aphrodite and Hermes was putting on for all the gods to see; however, it was not easy. "After several hours of waiting, Aphrodite finally came home—and Hephaestus was there waiting for her. It was now dark, so she fumbled through the room to find a light. One was turned on before she could come across one. It startled her so! She whipped around toward the direction of the source of the light, only to find Hephaestus sitting in his favorite easy chair, a glass of red wine in one hand and a grape bushel in the other. He had the most peculiar grin on his face. "How was your day, dearest?" he asked his wife charmingly. "Did you enjoy yourself?" "Why, yes, thank you," she said cautiously, wondering why on Olympus he was acting so out of the ordinary. "How was yours?" she asked after a small moment's hesitation. "Oh, it was remarkable, thanks." The grin never left his face. "Tell me, Aphrodite, did you make anyone happy today?" She gave him a confused look, as if she did not understand the question. Hephaestus picked up on it quickly and he re-addressed the question. "By that I mean, since you are the Goddess of Love and Beauty, did you make anyone happy? Perhaps, send them a reason to fall in love?" "Oh," she said at last, "of course I did. My day wouldn't be complete if I hadn't. Why do you ask, Hephaestus?" "I only ask because I just want to know how your day was, that's all," he responded almost immediately after the question was addressed. "No particular reason behind it." "I see," she said, still confused, and made her way to the giant marble staircase. "Well, I suppose I shall be heading up to bed now. I've had a very tiring day, you know. I will see you in the morning." "Okay then," he said, getting up from the chair. "One more thing, my love..." He walked toward her with a limp, grimacing slightly at the response his crippled leg gave him when he stood upon it. Nonetheless, he made his way to the bottom of the stairs. "Yes?" she asked, halfway up the stairs. "Was that Hermes I saw you with today next to the Burger God? You know, the one on the corner of Cronus and Rhea?" "Oh!" she almost said bluntly, but instead, "Yes, I suppose you could have. Why do you ask?" She had turned around completely now, and was slowly walking back down the stairs, step...by step...by step. "Well," he began, straightening his robe, "I happened to be taking a stroll down Rhea Street to drop off a sword for Zeus, and I noticed that you and he were...well, very fond of each other." "At that, Aphrodite's heart became very shallow and almost non-existent. Then it sped up, out of nowhere, and her face and ears turned bright red. "But...well...you see, I..." She tried to speak, but nothing would come out. There would have been a very long pause of silence if Hephaestus hadn't said: "Aphrodite, dear, please tell me either he was choking on something and you were only trying to get it out of him, or..." He stopped right there, tears slowly forming. He had seen the look in her eyes, and knew right then and there that there could not be an alternate to what he knew was undeniable. Tears began to flood his eyes, rage and anger pushing up from his stomach. He tried to hold back, being successful at first, then letting it all out. "How could you?" he sobbed, then boomed, "You broke my heart, Aphrodite! You ripped it from my chest, tore it into halves and quarters, threw it to the ground, stomped on it, then spat—" he took a deep breath, tears now streaming from his face—"then spat on it." Hephaestus removed his left hand from his hip, covered his eyes with it, and began to sob indefinitely. "Hephaestus, I'm truly sorry..." she said, achieving nothing. Then, in more effort to comfort him, she said, "I didn't want to hurt you." Hephaestus looked up, looking through the tears that flooded his eyes and face. He sniffed, "Did you do it because of this?"—he pointed to his deformed leg. "Is it because I am not the most beautiful immortal you have ever seen? Why must you be so shallow?" He now just stared at her, his eyes blazing with fury. Red, red fury. "Me, shallow?" she asked at once. "How can you accuse me of being shallow? All you do is spend all your time making goods and tools for other gods. You never ever sit and talk with me. We never do anything together." She stopped pleading, for the moment, and began to speak extremely...well, snobby. "I hardly think I am the one to blame for this mess, anyway." She turned a quarter of a turn, her left shoulder now facing her husband. "How can you say that?" he rasped. "You know just as well as I that I was not the one getting fresh with Hermes! Hermes, of all people. Ha!" His voice was now extremely loud, filled with anger. Hephaestus was not one to get so angry. If one were watching such an argument, they would surely know that Aphrodite had done something extremely terrible for him to be acting so unusual. "Oh, do shut up, will you!" Hephaestus was stunned. Never, in their many many years of marriage, had Aphrodite ever told him to shut up. "I don't want to hear another word about it. I will go upstairs to rest for the night; meanwhile, you will sleep down here in the easy chair. Sleep on the floor, for all I care! We shall talk about this in the morning." With that, she made her way upstairs. "No I won't!" he boomed, and rushed out the door, slamming it behind him. He did not return the rest of the evening. Or the next day...or the day after that...or the day after that...

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minute quot said aloud himself quot wife kissing hermes supposed devoted furious very rare when hephaestus became angry reason certain have taken notice unusual reaction must settle this like calm rational person told himself last this matter very easily resolved sighed shall speak when returns home until then going home rest while think things through with that thought hephaestus made home being absolutely sure look direction scene aphrodite hermes putting gods however easy after several hours waiting aphrodite finally came there waiting dark fumbled through room find light turned before could come across startled whipped around toward direction source light only find sitting favorite easy chair glass wine hand grape bushel other most peculiar grin face your dearest asked wife charmingly enjoy yourself thank said cautiously wondering olympus acting ordinary yours asked after small moment hesitance remarkable thanks grin never left face tell make anyone happy today gave confused look understand question picked quickly addressed question that mean since goddess love beauty make anyone happy perhaps send them reason fall love said last course wouldn't complete hadn't only because just wasn't know your that responded almost immediately after question addressed particular reason behind still confused made giant marble staircase well suppose shall heading tiring know will morning okay then getting from chair more thing love walked toward with limp grimacing slightly response crippled gave when stood upon nonetheless made bottom stairs asked halfway stairs with today next burger know corner cronus rhea almost bluntly instead suppose could have turned around completely slowly walking back down stairs step step step well began straightening robe happened taking stroll down rhea street drop sword zeus noticed were fond each other heart became shallow almost existent then sped nowhere face ears turned bright tried speak nothing would come there would have been long pause silence hadn't dear please tell either choking something were trying stopped right there tears slowly forming seen look eyes knew right could alternate what knew undeniable tears began flood eyes rage anger pushing from stomach tried hold back being successful first letting sobbed boomed broke heart ripped from chest tore into halves quarters threw ground stomped spat took deep breath tears streaming spat removed left hand covered eyes began indefinitely truly sorry achieving nothing more effort comfort didn't want hurt looked looking through flooded sniffed because this pointed deformed because most beautiful immortal ever seen must shallow just stared blazing fury shallow once accuse being spend your time making goods tools other gods never ever talk never anything together stopped pleading moment speak extremely snobby hardly think blame mess anyway quarter turn left shoulder facing husband rushed getting fresh people voice extremely loud filled anger angry were watching such argument they would surely done something extremely terrible acting unusual shut will stunned their many many years marriage ever told shut want hear another word about will upstairs rest night meanwhile sleep here easy chair sleep floor care shall talk about morning upstairs boomed rushed door slamming behind return rest evening next

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