

A GIFT UNDER WRAPS

By Jeff Dunne

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CHARACTERS

PROMETHEUS	The titan who stole fire from the gods.
PETRINA	A by-the-rules seasonal worker in the agora.

SETTING

A stall in the great Greek market in ancient times.

SCENE

(It is a gift-wrapping station in the corner of the central agora. A weary woman, PETRINA, stands behind a counter covered in different papers, ribbons, bows, etc. PROMETHEUS walks up to the counter with what might just be a bunch of small logs awkwardly and poorly wrapped in gift paper. Through the scene he gets increasingly nervous, thinking Zeus is going to find him soon.)

PROMETHEUS

Excuse me?

PETRINA

Take a number.

PROMETHEUS

But I'm the only one here.

(Petrina just stares at him. He picks up a number out of a little basket. He reads it, then shows it to her.)

Nine.

PETRINA

Serving six.

(Prometheus looks around. There's no one else there. He waits nervously.)

Six. Serving six.

(His patience wanes.)

Seven. Now serving seven.

PROMETHEUS

Can we just—

(She glares at him.)

PETRINA

Seven? Last call for seven.

PROMETHEUS

Do you know who I am?

PETRINA

I know you're not number seven.

PROMETHEUS

My name is Prometh—

PETRINA

Eight! Serving number eight.

PROME

Look, I'm in a bit of a rush, actually.

PETRINA

Eight?

(Prometheus struggles to control his frustration.)

Last call for eight. Eight?

(She finally looks at Prometheus and waves him over.)

PROMETHEUS

Thank you. Alright, so I just picked this up, and—

PETRINA

It's already wrapped.

PROMETHEUS

I know. I tried wrapping it myself, but I—

PETRINA

We *wrap* presents here. We don't unwrap them.

PROMETHEUS

I know that. I am aware of how this works. You see, I *tried* wrapping—

PETRINA

Then you know that we *wrap* presents, not unwrap them.

PROMETHEUS

Can I finish, please? I *know* you wrap presents. I've got that. Truly. You see, I *tried* wrapping this one, but—

PETRINA

Well you did a really awful job of it. I swear, men are so helpless when it comes to—

PROMETHEUS

(Taking a calming breath.)

Yes. I agree... this is clearly not my forte. Which is why I was hoping *you* could maybe... help patch it up a bit.

PETRINA

Tsk tsk tsk. *(She considers it, then...)* Did you purchase it here in the agora?

PROMETHEUS

Ahhh ummm....

PETRINA

This is a simple yes or no question.

PROMETHEUS

I did acquire it... nearby.

PETRINA

Nearby?

PROMETHEUS

On... Olympus.

PETRINA

Olympus. Like... Mount Olympus?

PROMETHEUS

Maybe.

PETRINA

Well, you really did do a terrible wrapping job here. Did I mention that? What is this anyway?

PROMETHEUS

I'd rather not say just yet.

PETRINA

Listen, Mr. Pro-meeth.

PROMETHEUS

Prometheus.

PETRINA

Listen, Mr. Prometheus. This is very irregular. We are only supposed wrap presents that were purchased in the agora. Who is this for anyway? A lady friend?

PROMETHEUS

No, it's... kind of for everyone, actually.

PETRINA

Everyone?

PROMETHEUS

Well, every mortal. Not the Gods. They... uhh... they've already got one.

PETRINA

This whole thing is starting to sound a little fishy to me. I'm not sure—

PROMETHEUS

I get that. I do. But can't you make an exception to the rules just this once? This really is going to be a really great gift. Something that people are going to use for years to come, and I... well, I just want it to look nice for... the big moment.

PETRINA

(With narrowed eyes, suspicious...)

We aren't permitted to wrap things that are dangerous. Does it have sharp edges?

PROMETHEUS

No. Not really, no.

PETRINA

Well, seeing as how we're not very busy right now, I suppose I can help you out. But I'll expect you to make a donation at the—

PROMETHEUS

Yes, yes. Fine. Glad to.

PETRINA

Alright. I'll just unwrap it first, and—

PROMETHEUS

(Looking over his shoulder nervously.)

Actually, I'd really rather you just tidied it up. Without... without unwrapping it, if that's okay.

PETRINA

Now listen, Mr. Prometheus. If you're trying to cause trouble...

PROMETHEUS

No, of course not. Not... much. No, I mean not at all. It's just that I think it would be better to keep it under wraps for the moment. Get it? Under *wraps*? No, well. Sorry, you're right. That wasn't funny at all, was it...

PETRINA

Is it dangerous?

PROMETHEUS

I suppose that depends on what you do with it.

PETRINA

Excuse me?

PROMETHEUS

But I mean, what couldn't be dangerous? Even a twig could poke out an eye, couldn't it?

PETRINA

Or a liver.

PROMETHEUS

What a disturbingly odd and unexpected observation.

PETRINA

(Looking far away, and getting excited.)

My mother said that I have a touch of the prophetic about me— Oh, look. Here comes Zeus! What luck! He always leaves me a few drachma when he comes around this time of ye—

PROMETHEUS

(Grabbing the present and rushing off.)

Excuse me! Just remembered I have... a thing... Maybe I'll stop bac.... Bye!

PETRINA

(Shaking her head at the strange man.)

Hrmpf. *(Looks around at the empty stage.)* Ten? Serving number ten...

(Lights out.)