

PROMETHEUS
BY AESCHYLUS

Translation & Adaption by Sophy Burnham
From existing texts by James Scully/C. John Herington and Edith Hamilton

With a modern Conclusion or Act II by
Sophy Burnham

Sophy Burnham
The Westchester 304B
4000 Cathedral Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20016

ACT I: Prometheus Bound
By Aeschylus

SCENE 1: PROLOGUE, THE FRAME

HEPHAISTOS, POWER, VIOLENCE on stage

POWER

So here, we've come to the edge of the world,
this howling waste,
this desert no one passes through.

All right, Hephaistos, God of forge and fire,
What Zeus wants done, you've got to do.
On these remote reaches
you're commanded:
lash this rebel bastard to the rock
 in chains that no one ever breaks.

After all, Hephaistos, it was your red, glowing beauty
 that he stole – FIRE!
The power behind all handiwork.
 He gave it away to human beings.
That's his crime, and the Gods demand
 he pay for it.
He must submit to the rule of Zeus
...and like it too.

He'll learn.
He's got to give up his feeling for these human... insects.

HEPHAISTOS

Violence... Power ... you've already carried out
 your orders from Zeus
 you're free to go now,
But me, I've little heart for chaining this god, my brother,
to a stark cliff.
And yet I must.
It's dangerous to disobey the Father's word. . . .

Against my will, I'll spike him to this rock.
 No human will he see, no human voice will reach his ear.

When his skin is burnt to blisters
 by the sun

he'll be glad when night draws her starry cloak across
the glare --
and glad again at day when the sun's warmth melts the glittering
frost that's left behind.
And always he'll be crushed by the load of each, every moment,
for nobody yet born can set him free.

POWER

That's what he gets for loving humankind
A god like him should know enough to fear the gods.

HEPHAISTOS

No, and Zeus is not about to mellow.

POWER

Now Prometheus will never rest nor sleep.
He'll sigh and howl -- and not a soul around to hear his cries.

HEPHAISTOS

All new dictators are harsh..

POWER

All this pity for a traitor!
Why don't you hate the god who betrayed you?

HEPHAISTOS

We're family, friends.

POWER

So you're refusing the Father's orders?
You know what Zeus is like.

HEPHAISTOS

You're pitiless . . . insulting.

POWER

Yes, I'll waste no pity on the likes of him
Don't sweat over a lost cause, I say.

