

HERA AND THE
HEADMASTER
AN SAT VOCABULARY STORY



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BIG WORDS MADE SIMPLE.

Hera and the Headmaster: An SAT Vocabulary Story

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Hera dressed herself in only the finest. In ancient times, her perfectly proportioned frame was clad exclusively in gossamer robes, her hair a model of artful dishabille.

Today, her long legs were encased in designer jeans, her previously barefoot toes squeezed into Christian Loubitons. Naturally, her lustrous hair was professionally blown out.

But as the goddess of marriage and motherhood entered the double doors of Sunset Preparatory Academy, she began to regret her choice of footwear. It wasn't that they were too tight, too high, or any such *mortal* complaint. Hera waved away such discomforts with a flick of her dainty fingers.

No, it was the incessant *click, click, click* they made as she walked the school's wide, polished hallway. Ye gods, half the pantheon of Mount Olympus would know she was here before she made it to the headmaster's office!

Despite her status as the goddess of motherhood, Hera didn't much care for children. She had only a handful of the creatures with her husband Zeus, loftily shunning mortal company for millennia.

Her brothers and sisters had no such class. They regularly dropped to earth in a shower of golden coins or (to Hera's eternal puzzlement) manifested themselves as animals to woo easily-impressed mortals.

Snotty faces notwithstanding, Hera wouldn't mind having a few hundred of the petulant creatures around right now. Their screams and infernal energy would provide a lovely bit of camouflage. But they were all in class, staring vacantly at laptops or doodling in their notebooks.

Proportioned - A harmonious relationship between the parts and the whole

Gossamer - Very light, thin, delicate

Dishabille - A state of disorder or being only partly dressed

Lustrous - Shiny; having luster

Incessant - Constant; never-ending

Pantheon - All the gods of a people or religion, usually referring to the Greek or Roman gods

Shunning - Rejecting; ignoring

Millennia - Thousands of years (the plural of millennium)

Petulant - Childishly sulky or bad-tempered; liable to change moods quickly

Infernal - Fiendish; diabolical

Vacantly - In an empty way; showing no interest

Mercifully, Hera made it to the headmaster's office without a chariot of her siblings swooping down from the sky. When she entered, Mr. Thompson was typing away at his standing desk.

"Ah, Mrs. Kolettis," he said with a forced smile. "So nice to finally meet you. Please, have a seat." He gestured to the shiny wooden table and chairs on the other side of his office.

Hera stood in the doorway a moment, looking at the headmaster. He was middle-aged and entirely forgettable. This balding specimen of humanity wouldn't dare challenge her.

"Why have you summoned me?" Hera glided into the room, taking the seat he offered.

"Coffee? Tea?" Mr. Thompson asked, coming to join her.

"No. And my time is valuable, so..."

"I understand," Mr. Thompson nodded. "It's young Andreas...there's been another fight at recess."

Hera raised a carefully shaped brow. "Who died?"

"Well...no one," Mr. Thompson said, puzzled.

"Can't have been much of a fight."

"Mrs. Kolettis," Mr. Thompson shifted uncomfortably in his chair. "Another student cut Andreas in the lunch line, and Andreas *pushed* him down. This other student has been quite anxious around Andreas since, and our school takes physical violence *very* seriously. I'm afraid we're going to have to ask Andreas to leave. Permanently."

Hera sat very still. "Expelled?" she asked in a tight-lipped smile.

"Our school has a three-strike policy. The administration had no choice."

"I believe, sir, that there is always a choice." Hera's voice had an edge to it that made the headmaster want to hide behind the potted plant in the corner of the room. "It

Specimen - An individual sample of a larger group

is my choice, for instance, to dispense grants with a lavish hand to the school my son attends. If Andreas is no longer a student here..."

Mr. Thompson steeled himself. The other teachers had made it clear that Andreas *had* to go, munificent mother and all. The boy had already gotten into a mountain of mischief in his paltry year at Sunset Prep; it's just that he was so wily, it was impossible to definitively pin most of it on him.

"We've already drawn up the paperwork." Mr. Thompson retrieved the document from his desk drawer, then slid it across the table to the goddess of marriage and motherhood. Hera's manicured fingers tightened around the Hermes bag on her lap.

She wasn't even supposed to *have* children with mortals. How would it look when everyone found out she'd betrayed her oath to Zeus, and the offspring was a failure to boot?

Hera took a deep breath, already plotting her next move. But before moving on, she decided to show a certain headmaster the folly of interfering with a deity...and a notoriously vindictive one, at that.

Hera reached for the pen, signing her pseudonym with such force that the dot of the "i" tore the page. Rising, she left Mr. Thompson with a wicked smile and a threat he would ponder for years to come.

"I warn you, sir. Those whose house is shaken by the gods escape no form of doom."

Dispense - Give out; distribute

Munificent - Generous

Offspring - Child or children

Folly - Foolishness

Deity - A god or goddess

Notoriously - Well known, usually in a bad way

Vindictive - Vengeful

Pseudonym - False name

Ponder - Think deeply (about)