

Bourne toWrite...

creative writing
workshops

Revenge

by Penny Jones

Hera the queen of the goddesses lay cushioned among the clouds of Mount Olympus, surveying the antics of the mortals. As the peacocks round her throne raised their tails and flashed their all seeing eyes, the actions of her subjects were illuminated in all their small and pitiable banality. Compelled by these millions of eyes she was cursed to be ever watchful. She tried to turn her head away, looking instead towards the perfect sky and everlasting beauty of heaven but her gaze was pulled forever back towards the imperfections of the earth and the self destructive actions of the people who inhabited it.

It had been a busy season for Hera. The recent few days, or was it aeons, of boredom had been lifted somewhat by the need to address several of the actions perpetrated on their subjects by her husband Zeus. The victims, usually young women, but not always, appeared to be incapable of resisting his charms. It was her duty as first wife and dowager to demonstrate her displeasure at these dalliances and punish the unfortunates and their children – born and unborn.

She had turned Callisto into a bear, which now rather irritatingly shone in the sky as one of the brightest constellations, but which did not of course outshine the sparkling Milky way – the trail of milk that had spurting from Hera's own breast as she had awoken and prevented the infant Hercules from suckling, offered by his father Zeus in an attempt to make him immortal. She had spent much time and effort on making that little bastard's life a misery. As the last of his labours had been accomplished there was a need to find some other punishment to keep him on his toes. And now the Trojan war was underway, and if anyone thought she was going to sue for peace after the rejection she had received at the hands of that tasteless Paris....

Hera yawned and tried to rise from the engulfing clouds. It was ironic she thought that she was usually depicted by the mortals in stone, majestic, wearing a crown, sometimes covered by a matronly veil, with a staff or sceptre in her hand when really she spent most of her time lounging around in a crumpled chiton, the ancient Greek equivalent of jogging bottoms and t-shirt.

Perhaps she had let herself go a bit. Could Paris have had a point? Surely not. Aphrodite had been judged the most beautiful because she had offered to introduce the shepherd Paris to

Helen of Troy and that had not worked out well had it? Still perhaps it was time to make a change.

A thunderclap signalled the return of her husband and disturbed these reveries. Zeus had an annoying habit of turning up with tales of his latest conquest, which she was always well aware of by the time of his arrival.

“I have been thinking” Hera said “I want a divorce.”