


HEPHAESTUS

GOD OF THE FORGE AND FIRE



AMBER SPARKS FLY
WHEN **HEPHAESTUS** WIELDS
HIS WELL-WORN HAMMER
ON HEAT-SOFTENED STEEL,
STRIKING
AND SHAPING
AND HANDCRAFTING METAL
AS GOD OF THE FORGE
SERVING GODS AND MORTALS:
ATHENA'S SHINING SHIELD,
THUNDERBOLTS FOR ZEUS,
HADES' INVISIBLE HELMET,
AND HERMES' MAGIC SHOES.
BUT ON MOUNT OLYMPUS,
OF ALL THE GODS,
ONLY HEPHAESTUS
IS PHYSICALLY FLAWED.
HIS LEGS WERE **DEFORMED**
AND PERMANENTLY BROKEN
WHEN ZEUS OR HERA,
HIS PARENTS, FLUNG HIM
FROM HIGH ON OLYMPUS
WHERE HE FELL FOR NINE DAYS
AND **SMASHED** INTO ROCKS
SURROUNDED BY WAVES.
TO THE SEA HE PLUNGED,
AND THERE HE WAS RAISED
BY THE SEA GODDESS THETIS
IN AN OCEAN CAVE,
WHERE HE HONED THE ART

AND CRAFT OF HIS TRADE,
CREATING TROPICAL FISH
FROM JEWELS THAT HE MADE
TO HONOR HIS NEW
MOTHER BECAUSE SHE
RAISED HIM WITH LOVE
UNCONDITIONALLY.
BUT SINCE HE IS SMALL,
LAME, AND NOT BEAUTIFUL,
ALL THE GODS TREAT
HEPHAESTUS WITH **RIDICULE**;
ESPECIALLY HIS VERY
OWN WIFE, APHRODITE,
WHO CHEATS ON HIM
WITH OTHER MEN CONSTANTLY.
STILL
HIS SKILL
EARNED HIM THE REPUTATION
AS THE ULTIMATE CRAFTSMAN
WHOSE EVERY CREATION
NEVER FAILS TO **AWE**
NEVER FAILS TO **INSPIRE**
WHEN HIS HAMMERING HANDS
SCULPT, WITH FIRE,
METAL INTO ART
THAT ALL ADMIRE
FROM HIS VOLCANIC FORGE
EXHALING HIGH
PLUMES OF SMOKE,
CHOKING THE SKY.

