

The **pantomīmus** Paris performed for his lover, the Empress Domitia Augusta, on a private stage in the palace of her husband Domitian. The performance was a one-man version of the love-affair between Mars and Venus (who was already married to Vulcan the son of Juno), a story of divine adultery that mirrored the actual adultery between the empress and the **pantomīmus**.

*The story below is a retelling of the myth, based on the Latin version of Ovid, in his **Metamorphoses**, IV. 169–189. When you have read this story, answer the questions that follow.*

deus Sōl p̄rimus adulterium Veneris et Mārtis vīdit, quod semper omnia p̄rimus videt. quī, magnō dolōre affectus, Vulcānō, filiō Iūnōnis, marītōque Veneris, fūrtum atque locum fūrti quam celerrimē dēmōnstrāvit. quae cum Vulcānus audīvisset, palluit et statuam auream, quam callidē sculpēbat, statim omīsit. deinde irā commōtus, diū in officīnā labōrābat; tandem, catēnīs gracilibus ex aere 5 excūsīs, rētia perfēcit ut laqueīs subtilibus amantēs dēprehenderet. haec rētia, quae tantā arte facta sunt ut tāctūs levēs mōmentaue parva sequerentur, Vulcānus in lectō Veneris collocāvit. postquam Venus, uxor Vulcānī, cum adulterō Mārte in lectum cōnscondit et Mārs, “venī, mea columba,” exclāmāvit, in mediīs amplexibus rētibus subtilibus implicātī sunt. quōs cum vīdisset, 10 Vulcānus cēterōs deōs arcessīvit ut flāgitium patefaceret. dī, Venerem Mārtemque cōnspicātī, valdē dērīsērunt.

adulterium	<i>adultery</i>	subtilibus: subtilis	<i>of fine texture</i>
fūrtum: fūrtum	<i>here secret love</i>	dēprehenderet: dēprehendere	<i>seize</i>
callidē	<i>cleverly</i>	tāctūs: tāctus	<i>touch</i>
omīsit: omittere	<i>drop</i>	levēs: levis	<i>light</i>
gracilibus: gracilis	<i>thin, slender</i>	mōmenta: mōmentum	<i>movement</i>
aere: aes	<i>bronze</i>	sequerentur: sequī	<i>here yield to</i>
excūsīs: excūdere	<i>forge</i>	amplexibus: amplexus	<i>embrace</i>
rētia: rēte	<i>net (cf. rētiārius)</i>	implicātī sunt: implicāre	<i>entangle</i>
laqueīs: laqueus	<i>snare, trap</i>	flāgitium: flāgitium	<i>shame</i>

- 1 Who was the first to see the adultery? Why?
- 2 How did the Sun react? What did he do?
- 3 How did Vulcan react? What did he drop?
- 4 Describe the snare which Vulcan created. Where was it?
- 5 Describe the success of his snare.
- 6 What did Vulcan do when he saw Venus and Mars? Why?
- 7 What was the gods' reaction? How else might they have reacted?
- 8 If the Empress Domitia and the **pantomīmus** Paris were the real-life counterparts of Venus and Mars, who together were the real-life counterparts of Vulcan?