

SCENE 1

ARES and VENUS sit at a refectory table finishing their lunch.

GWEN sits alone at another table, eating a yoghurt, oblivious to their presence.

VENUS: I can't believe you actually ate that.

ARES: It is food. What is there of belief?

VENUS: We are Gods. You are a God. We can span all time and space within the human domain and yet you choose this, a lowly refectory in an undistinguished place of learning.

ARES: You forget yourself sister. I am not merely a God, I am The God.

VENUS: Of war.

ARES: Of battles, of strife, of conquest. Of blood, glory, war and thunder. And this, this is food as it ought to be, food fit for a warrior; simple, plain, perfunctory -

VENUS: And challenging?

ARES: There is a certain sense of triumph in its consumption certainly.

VENUS: Victory over a pizza. You make me so proud.

ARES: You underestimate the enemy. The topping was considerably tougher than it looked.

VENUS: Not everything has to be a challenge you know, for instance, have you ever tried eating cake?

ARES: No. Never. Should I have?

VENUS: Absolutely, everyone should. Especially you.

ARES: Then this cake of which you speak; it is a resolute and stern opponent?

VENUS: No you moron. It's not an adversary, it's a friend. A delicious, soft, spongy friend, kind to the mouth and a delight to the senses, whose simple existence and proximity brings happiness and contentment.

ARES: Then I shall never know it. Such insignificant trifles interest me not at all.

VENUS: Insignificant? Excuse me? Since when is happiness insignificant?

ARES: Do not misunderstand me Sister, I do not say this to denigrate you in any way. You are the goddess of love -

VENUS: Human relationship resources if you don't mind. I like to move with the times.

ARES: As you will it changes nothing. Compared to the glory and power of conflict such trivial emotions as happiness are as nothing. This is a simple fact.

VENUS: You really have never eaten cake have you?

ARES: No. And I shall make it my business to ensure that I never do.

VENUS: That is such a shame you know, eating a bit of cake could really improve you. Open up your eyes to a world of human experience and emotion. Maybe then you'd realise that there are greater challenges and more rewarding trials than just fighting.

ARES: Such as "relationship resources" I suppose.

VENUS: It would be one example certainly.

ARES: You speak nonsense Sister. The forces that draw together men and women are scarcely a mystery and I am well aware of these much vaunted "relationships" that you constantly propound upon.

VENUS: Really? Care to bet on that?

ARES: By all means. Though it is hardly a wager, my victory is certain. As it always is.

VENUS: Indulge me.

ARES: Name your field of trial and I shall meet it.

VENUS: Very well.

VENUS looks over at GWEN, sitting alone stirring a small pot of yoghurt.

VENUS: Her.

ARES: The girl? That would be a short combat indeed.

VENUS: I'm not proposing you fight her you idiot.

ARES: Oh. Really? Then what?

VENUS: Make her fall in love.

ARES: That is your trial?

VENUS: That is my trial.

ARES: You wish me to simply ensure that this girl find happiness with a mate.

VENUS: Yes.

ARES: It is scarcely a trial.

VENUS: So you accept?

ARES: Why would I not?

VENUS: There would be no brute force here. We play by the ancient rules. No coercion. No revealing yourself or use of power.

ARES: I am aware of the rules.

VENUS: So you accept?

ARES looks over at GWEN, hesitating.

VENUS: Scared?

ARES: Do not be ridiculous. I fear nothing. Your challenge is accepted.

VENUS: Then let us begin.

ARES and VENUS leave their table.

ARES: The heart of a female. This will be simple.

VENUS: That's the spirit.

ARES and VENUS exit.

HELEN enters and sits at GWEN's table opposite her. GWEN carries on stirring the yoghurt and appears not to notice.

HELEN: Hi.

GWEN: Yeah.

HELEN: You okay?

GWEN: Yeah.

HELEN: Okay.

HELEN puts her lunch down on the table.

HELEN: You sure you're okay? You seem a bit, sort of ...

GWEN: *(Stops stirring)* What?

HELEN: Nothing.

GWEN stares at her yoghurt, stirring it slowly again. She takes the spoon out overloaded with yoghurt and is about to eat.

HELEN: This isn't about Michael again is it?

GWEN: *(Stops spoon in mid-air, yoghurt falls on the table by GWEN)*
No.

HELEN: Oh. Right.

GWEN: It isn't.

HELEN: Fine. Good.

GWEN: Why would it be?

HELEN: Absolutely no reason at all.

GWEN goes back to eating her yoghurt, trying to get the last spoonful out.

GWEN: It's just that ...

HELEN: What?

GWEN tips her head back and upends the yoghurt pot, scraping the last few bits directly into her mouth.

GWEN: *(Still eating)* Why do people have to be so gross?

HELEN: I don't know. It's a mystery.

GWEN finishes eating and puts down the empty yoghurt pot.

GWEN: I mean, take Michael, as you bring him up, just as an example.

HELEN: What's he done?

GWEN: Did you see him in the labs?

HELEN: Should I have?

GWEN: Oh god it was pathetic, he was just all over Jemma.

HELEN: Really? He was?

GWEN: Duh! It was all –

JEMMA and MICHAEL enter from opposite sides wearing lab coats and safety goggles. They meet in the centre.

MICHAEL: No one can crystallise sulphates like you Jemma.

JEMMA: *(Taking off her goggles and shaking her hair loose)* It's all about heat.

MICHAEL: There is a fire. A flame that burns between us.

JEMMA: Yes. I must modulate my bunsen burner.

JEMMA and MICHAEL exit.

SAMPLE PAGES