

Waves of Gold

Von abgemeldet

Kapitel 2:

Waves of Gold

Based on: Asterix & Obelix

Creators: Goscinny & Uderzo

Part 2

"Panacea, my dear! How lovely to see you!"

The young girl almost had the breath knocked out of her by a tight, lavender-scented hug from Impedimenta. They were standing around the well, along with several other women and girls, who were all crowding around Panacea like she was a lost sheep returned to the fold. Not all the looks and questions directed at her were friendly, however; some of them, while sounding friendly on the surface, set her teeth on edge with their veiled hostility.

"What an...interesting dress you're wearing. Is that the fashion in Condatum?"

"Brave of you to show that much cleavage."

"And how's that gorgeous fiancé of yours? You broke up? Oh, I'm so sorry! Men are jerks, aren't they?"

Panacea swallowed several angry remarks, smiled and gave neutral answers. This sort of thing was the reason why she visited so rarely. These petty, gossipy, narrow-minded women had always resented her, just because she was born with a pretty face and because she had traveled to get an education. It made her want to scream.

Impedimenta, reading the look on her young friend's face correctly, linked arms with her and swept the others with an imposing First Lady glare. "How would you like to step over for a snack, sweetheart? We have so much to catch up on. Yes? Well, excuse me, ladies. We'll just get going then. See you later!"

A few minutes later, safely ensconced in the Chief's hut, Impedimenta and Panacea sat down opposite each other with a plate of fresh honey cakes between them. The older woman's face was lined with concern.

"Don't let them get to you," she said. "Those vultures. They think this place is the axis of the earth and anyone who leaves it is a fool. I've always admired what you did – going off on your own, making a new life for yourself. Sometimes I think I'd like to do the same – only," she rolled her eyes, "Who would take care of Piggywiggy? Not to mention running the village? Without me, everything would go to the dogs."

Panacea smiled. She had heard all that before. The truth was, Impedimenta loved ordering people around – her husband included.

"But enough about me," said Impedimenta. "What about you? I heard what happened

between you and Tragicomix. What a pity. You made such a beautiful couple."

That was enough. Panacea snapped. "Not you, too! Everyone keeps saying that - as if looking beautiful together were the only reason to date someone! See, that's just it - beautiful was all I was to him. Nothing else. I was this trophy girlfriend he used to show around at parties. When I tried to talk to him about school and what I'd learned, he used to kiss me just to shut me up. I know there were lots of girls who would've killed to be in my position...but...I wasn't really happy at all. The spark was gone - you know? So I left."

She nibbled slowly at her honey cake.

"It's still hard, though," she continued. "I miss him. Well, not him - the idea of him and me together as this beautiful couple, like you said. I miss being engaged. Having some kind of certainty. Knowing there'll always be someone to take care of me even when Father is gone."

"You did the right thing," said Impedimenta. "It's hard, being married to someone you no longer love or even respect."

They sat in silence, Panacea wondering what that meant. Impedimenta certainly never showed much respect for Vitalstatistix. Did she love him, though? Was that why she still called him Piggywiggy, or was it just a leftover habit?

"Anyway," the older woman teased. "Don't worry about your future. With your looks - and brains - you could marry Caesar himself and get him to leave the village alone. How's that sound?"

They laughed so hard, the table shook. Panacea, feeling much better for a bracing round of girl talk, popped another pastry into her mouth and began describing the course in modern philosophy she had been taking in Condatum: Plato, Aristoteles, Socrates and more. But in the back of her mind, a series of shadows kept flitting past, like in Plato's Cave Allegory: She and Tragicomix, reunited after Asterix and Obelix's fabled venture behind enemy lines to rescue him. Thinking their bliss would last forever. Then the chilly silences, the coldly civilized arguments. Feeling like the loneliest girl in the world when spending time with one's fiancé had to be a bad sign. It was partly her own fault, of course. She could have been more patient, more accepting, when he revealed himself as less of a Prince Charming than she had thought. How naïve of her, to put him on a pedestal and then get disappointed because he didn't live up to her ideals.

Anyway, it's over now, she told herself. I just have to put it behind me.

Huh. Easier said than done.