

Waves of Gold

Von abgemeldet

Kapitel 7:

Waves of Gold

Based on: The Asterix comics

Creators: Goscinny & Uderzo

Part 7

Panacea was six years old, with a pronounced lisp and an outright fear of people, especially boys. She was playing alone with her pink rag doll, Cora, when suddenly she felt a painful tug on her left pigtail. Someone – Fulliautomatix, the blacksmith's son, who was three years older – yanked her to her feet by the hair, laughing.

"Hey, Panathea!" he sneered, mimicking her lisp. "You're so smart, tell us who rules Rome!"

"J-juliuth Theathar," she stuttered, causing him and the surrounding children to roar and shriek with laughter. Twisted faces were all around her, a solid ring of them, with no way to escape.

"And this village?"

"V-Vital..thatithticth."

She mustn't cry. That was what her parents said. It would only encourage them. But that choked, burning feeling was already rising in her throat, panic smothering her like a wave of ice water. Why? she wanted to scream. Why can't you just leave me alone? Suddenly another boy elbowed his way through the crowd and shoved Fulliautomatix aside. He was smaller, pudgy and uncoordinated, with a mop of red curls and huge brown eyes blazing with fury. He shook with fear as he faced the sturdy smith's son, but did not turn away. "Get away from her!" he ordered.

A very short, skinny blond boy followed. They were a pair of misfits, those two, of no interest to anyone but each other. "No, Obelix, It's not worth it!" he hissed, tugging on his friend's arm. "He'll just beat you up again!"

"I don't care. You," rounding on Fulliautomatix, "You leave Panacea alone, or I...I'll hit you."

"Oh yeah?" The older boy snickered. "Let's see you try it, fatso!"

"I'm not – oww!" Fulliautomatix punched Obelix in the stomach, making him double over in pain. Panacea noted that her pigtails were free and backed away quickly, rubbing her injured scalp and watching anxiously to see what was happening. She didn't want Obelix to be hurt on her behalf, but what could she do?

The wall of children was between her and them; she could hear raucous chants of , "Fight! Fight!" and the occasional yelp of pain. the wall parted and Obelix stumbled

into her view, covering a black eye with his hand, sporting a cut lip and bloody nose.

"Loser!" shouted the children, Fulliautomatix the loudest of all.

Panacea went back to the empty schoolroom and hid behind her desk, hoping to be safe there until Getafix returned from his break and could start the afternoon lessons. The place was blessedly quiet; she closed her eyes, still shivering, trying to erase the image of the fight from her mind.

Suddenly new shouts rose up from the yard – fear, surprise.

"You did what?!"

"I sneaked into the druid's house and drank the potion," declared Obelix. "And I fell in the kettle and got soaked all over, but that's okay. I'm super strong now. Watch!"

Gasps. Squeals. Panacea's curiosity got the better of her and she ran outside.

Obelix was glowing with yellow light, just the way her father looked before going into battle; it radiated off him in waves. He seemed to have grown by several inches, and his injuries from the fight before were completely healed. He was holding Fulliautomatix up by the shirt collar, dangling above the ground.

"Now, the next time you're mean to Panacea – or anyone, ever – you answer to me. Got it?"

The smith's son nodded vehemently; it was his turn to tremble.

Obelix lifted him up, flung him into the air, and turned away contemptuously. The other children backed away in fear. Asterix stood next to him, shaking his head with a mix of chagrin, affection and pride; he couldn't believe his friend had been so reckless, but he was glad of the way it turned out.

(Fulliautomatix landed in the branches of the tree where Beatnix the bard lived, just at the moment when his young son Cacophonix let loose with one of his horrible screeching songs. The memory of that humiliation was to haunt the smith for the rest of his life.)

A few days later, Panacea came to school with a bowlful of strawberries - to show that she was ready to forgive and forget, and to be accepted into the group. They were also the only way she could think of to express her heartfelt gratitude to Obelix.

He took three berries and no more, mumbling an almost inaudible thank-you and staring at his feet. She took that to mean that he resented her – after all, helping her had earned him a beating, a soak in potion, and a new outsider status as the monster with superhuman powers. So she kept her distance from him throughout all of their childhood and adolescence, pushing those memories away so that nothing was left of them except a vague sense of inadequacy, of not being good or smart or pretty enough.

A lack of confidence stuck to her in spite of her schoolmates' unfailing fear-induced courtesy, and did not leave her even in her university years, when her body finally gained its womanly curves and she freed her hair from its pigtails. So when handsome, dashing ladies' man Tragicomix began to seek her company, she was grateful and flattered enough to fall head-over-heels in love and accept his proposal without thinking.

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And look where I am today, thought Panacea, smiling ironically. No wiser than I was twenty years ago.

Dawn was rising; it was Samhain, the day of the dead. And now, it seemed, her old memories were coming back to haunt her along with the spirits of her ancestors.

She remembered Obelix's confession in the clearing. "When I saw you that day, holding out your strawberries – not scared or disgusted at all – that hungry feeling

went away. It was like... I'd eaten the sun and it was shining inside of me." No wonder he had been tongue-tied.

Obelix wants to protect everyone. Asterix, Dogmatix and me...That's why he hates the Roman invaders - it's Fulliautomatix's bullying on a national scale. This is what made him the way he is.

And it's why I love him.