

Waves of Gold

Von abgemeldet

Kapitel 4:

Waves of Gold

By Laura Schiller

Based on: Asterix & Obelix

Creators: Goscinny & Uderzo

Part 4

"Getafix?"

"Hmm?" The old druid looked up from the cauldron he was stirring to find Obelix wandering in, a lost expression on his normally cheerful face. His hands were behind his back; he paced aimlessly around the room, pretending to look up at the bunches of dried herbs hanging from the ceiling, looking anywhere but at Getafix.

"Do you have... a potion somewhere... that could heal a broken heart?"

Getafix had been expecting this, ever since Panacea's parents first announced that she was coming to visit. It took some control for him not to laugh, silly as the question might be. Instead he composed his features into what he hoped was a wise, druidic look of sympathy.

"I'm afraid I can't help you that way, dear boy. Emotions are more complicated than that."

What Obelix said next took the druid by surprise.

"No, not me. It's Panacea. She broke off her engagement and she's really upset. The look on her face...it was like..." he stared into the fire, watching it dance and leap as if it were the only thing in the world. "Like that time when me and Asterix weren't speaking to each other. Or when I saw her with Tragicomix. She was hurt like that. Or worse." He scowled at the fire like a personal enemy, fidgeting, then abruptly turned around and began to pace again, back and forth.

"Man, I wish that pretty-boy was here!" he rumbled. "I'd pound him! I'd smash his pretty face so no girl would ever look at him again! I could run all the way down to Condatum and..."

"Now, now, Obelix. Calm down," Getafix interrupted, spreading his hands in the air.

"That wouldn't help anyone, especially Panacea."

"Then what? What should I do?" Obelix turned to look Getafix in the face for the first time. He'd forgotten to shave, his hair ties were coming undone and there were purple shadows under his eyes, as if he had spent a restless night. This was a problem that couldn't be fixed by drinking a potion, throwing punches or travelling somewhere by boat or cart. This was a journey of the heart – the most frightening and unfamiliar

territory any man could travel.

"Wait and see, my friend," said Getafix sadly, giving the younger man a pat on the shoulder. "Time is a great healer. Greater than any potion I could make. And perhaps you could try to talk to her, get to know her. And by the gods, don't look so frightened!" This time he really couldn't stop the chuckles that came out. "You demolish Caesar's soldiers by the thousand and get scared of a single girl. How is that possible?"

"Think this is funny?" growled Obelix, pretending to be annoyed but looking perceptibly brighter. "You and Asterix just won't stop laughing at me. Thanks anyway. You're a good pal."

Obelix clapped Getafix on the back, knocking him over ("Oof! Go easy on an old man, would you?") and left, humming tunelessly and looking his old familiar self again, at least for the moment.

Getafix picked himself up off the floor, smoothed his white robe, and went back to watching the newest batch of super-strength potion. Things might be quiet on the Roman front, but he wasn't about to leave the village unprepared. The thick green liquid bubbled sluggishly in its, looking like a perfectly ordinary herb and vegetable stew. If it weren't for the power-up effect, he wondered, however would he get the carnivorous villagers to eat their greens?

The potion. Poor Obelix had been too worried even to try and sneak a taste. Was that a good sign or a bad sign?

Thinking about the potion and Obelix together always made the druid feel queasy, even after all these years. It was all his fault, really. If he'd just locked the door that day, or covered the pot, or something...but how was he to know one of the children would sneak in and try to drink it? Now Obelix would never be normal again.

What would it be like, to grow up as a freak of nature? Knocking on doors only to have them smash at your slightest touch? Frightening your parents and your peers when all you ever wanted was to be accepted? It was a wonder the boy had turned out as well as he had.

With his power, he could have challenged the chieftains of every village in Gaul and become the ruler of them all. Instead he had joined Asterix to protect and defend their home, and Getafix's oversight had proved a blessing for them all. The gods certainly worked in mysterious ways.

Suddenly the old man's ruminations were interrupted by a quiet knock on his door.

"Come in," he called.

A red-faced, disheveled Panacea stumbled inside, propelled by a blast of wind. Pushing her tangled hair back from her face, she hovered by the door as if expecting him to shoo her out. "Are you very busy, Master Druid? I'd like to talk to you about something, if that's all right."

"Of course it's all right, my child. You know I'm never too busy to talk to you."

Tall and beautiful as she was, he could still see the little girl she had been, timidly asking him to teach her another story about the gods or explain the use of a certain herb. She had been his best student; if she were a man, she would be his apprentice by now. Too bad the men of this village were too stiff-necked to accept a female druid.

"Pull up a chair, that's it. Now, how are you doing? And don't just say you're fine. I really want to know."

She sighed, slumped over in her chair, then straightened up again, remembering years of admonishments about bad posture. "I don't know. That's just it. I'm all confused."

"Why don't you try and tell me. If you put it into words, maybe it will sound simpler."

She paused for a while, biting her lower lip, as if struggling to find the right words.

"It's just...there's this guy... who's apparently in love with me. A friend of mine said it's so obvious the whole village knows, but I never noticed 'till she pointed it out. It would explain a lot though...like, why he gets so nervous and absent-minded around me."

What a sweet girl, thought Getafix smugly. She thinks she can protect his privacy by leaving out the names. But if that's not Obelix, I'll eat my cauldron.

"And on my last visit, he even showed up at our house once with a bunch of violets. He just stood there, didn't say anything. It was kind of sweet, actually. How did he know they're my favorite flower?"

Getafix felt like jumping up and down, he was so happy for Obelix. This was better than either of them had hoped.

But then Panacea spread out her hands in a gesture of helplessness and confusion.

"I don't know," she said. "I'm just not ready to get involved with someone...what if everything goes wrong again? But he's just...he's so nice. I don't want to hurt him."

That sounded less promising. "So you have no feelings for...this person?" Getafix asked, trying to clear things up.

Panacea made a face. "Well, I shouldn't. But I don't know what I feel. Is it because of what my friend said, or a physical reaction, or what? Because the other day I...we were talking in the forest and..."

Her hands moved to cover a sudden, brilliant blush. Getafix raised his eyebrows inquiringly, making her blush even more.

"Just talking," she clarified. "Nothing happened. Except in my imagination, and that's what worries me. I'm supposed to be still getting over Tragicomix, and I am. Daydreaming about this other man just makes everything more complicated."

Getafix cleared his throat awkwardly. This was one of the hardest part of his job; Obelix was easy to understand, but the mysteries of the female mind, even after so many years of mentoring, were still as complex to him as the Minotaur's labyrinth. Just when he had his piece of advice ready, however, she spoke up again.

"And on top of everything, I had a fight with my friend. She doesn't approve of him at all – the other man, I mean, not Tragicomix. She said some nasty things and I... I slammed the door in her face."

"Sometimes our friends can be overzealous in trying to protect us," said Getafix. "I'm sure she thought she was only looking out for you." He didn't know who this friend was – was it a girl her own age, or one of the older women?

"I know...I'd better go and apologize. I'm sure she didn't mean to be unkind."

"Yes. And about your other problem...it's your decision to make, but I suggest that you think carefully. Don't make any rash decisions. Wait until you're certain of your feelings – I don't know how long that will take, though, since it's different for everyone."

He wanted to give her a good strong hint that she could do much worse than choose 'the other man', but restrained himself. He was a druid, not a matchmaker, and this was the most sensible course of action he could think of. Of course, given the froth and bubble of her youthful emotions, being sensible was no easy task. Had he ever been this young?

"Thank you so much for listening, Master," said Panacea, with a sigh as if dropping a heavy load. "It really helps. I've got to get going now, though. Mother's expecting me to help her with the strawberry preserves."

"Oh, that's right. Your famous preserves." Getafix glanced over at the shelf where he

was collecting his winter store, various sealed clay pots full of pickles, fruit or cured meat. "Bring me over a jar sometime, won't you, my dear? Just a small one. You know how men are about sweets."

He would have liked to hug her and stroke her hair as he used to when she was little, but she was a young lady now and her dignity might be ruffled.

Just before opening the door, she paused, a faraway look on her face.

"Strawberries...now what does that remind me of?"