

# Goddess of Life

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## **AC 198**

Hilde was in the kitchen chopping carrots to add to the stew. As usual, Duo was in the living room watching the telescreen. Since he had come back from his last battle, they had settled into a near routine. Unfortunately, it seemed to Hilde he didn't quite have the same feelings for her as she did for him. He treated her well, there was no doubt he cared about her, he was just too polite. They'd been living together for three years, and not once in all that time had he ever given her pause to consider a deeper relationship. Yet, her heart belonged to him totally. She so longed for him to hold her, kiss her, love her. But night after night, she went to her room and he to his. She moved to chop some onions, mainly to mask her tears. He would never see her as anything but a friend, no matter how many times she dreamed of being more to him. A knock came to the Door and Duo went to answer it. Hilde sighed and repressed her slowly breaking heart when SHE walked in.

"Hello Hilde. Just brought some paperwork by." Margot DeBois said as she laid the stack of forms on the counter. The female sweeper was gorgeous and Hilde felt like a toad compared to her. Margot had long blonde hair that always appeared to be perfectly groomed. The woman NEVER had a bad hair day in Hilde's opinion. Not to mention Margot had the perfect Barbie doll, hourglass figure that could stop a clock. She was tall, and statuesque, and perfect. Hilde hated her. She was Duo's friend, so Hilde bit her tongue, smiled, and welcomed Margot unwillingly into her life. "I'll look the paperwork over later. Thanks Margot." Duo said rolling his eyes at the large stack of paperwork. Hilde bristled at his next words. "Want to stay for Dinner?" He asked and Margot smiled. "Sure, I'd love to." Margot replied. Hilde plastered a fake smile to her face. "It'll be ready in a minute." She said turning away to dump the chopped vegetables into the boiling broth. Margot and Duo sat on the couch in front of the telescreen, laughing and talking while watching the football game. 'She's perfect for him. You knew one day this would happen Hilde.' She said to herself as she silently watched him slip further away.

It was then she spotted a flowery piece of stationary amidst the paperwork, curious she pulled out the letter and as she read the words, her heart shattered like glass. In Duo's handwriting the note read:

***How can I find the words I wish to say  
to tell you how you make me feel?  
From the first day we met,  
I knew in my heart we were meant to be.  
Everyday I am blessed to look into your eyes,  
and I am granted a vision of a Love I don't deserve.  
You are my Goddess of Life.  
For you make me see the joy of living everyday  
you grace me with your presence.  
I will Love you for all time.***

Hilde's hand shook as she laid the note back on the pile of paperwork. Her worst nightmare was playing itself out before her eyes. "At least you're happy." Hilde said as she silently went to her room. Like an automaton, she packed what few meager belongings she had. Through her tears she scrawled a farewell letter. She knew saying these things to him would be impossible. Her letter read:

***Dear Duo,***

***Knowing you have found your heart's desire makes me happy.***

***I'll make myself scarce, Nothing would upset your girl more than to have you living with another girl. Thank you for being my friend. Your friendship has meant more to me than you will ever know.***

***Take Care of yourself Duo. I'll always remember you.***

***Good-bye, You'll forever be in my heart.***

***Hilde***

Without looking back, she crossed back to the kitchen, laying her note beside the one Duo had written, then silently walked out the door. She left Duo with what she had come to him with, nothing. A few changes of clothes and fifteen credit chips to her name, Hilde vanished into the night.

Duo smelled the stew and dragging his attention from the game, went into the kitchen to see dinner boiling over onto the stove. "Whoa! Hey Hilde?! Hilde?! How do I stop this thing?!" He called out. Wondering why on earth Hilde left this alone. She never burned dinner. She was the best cook he knew. "Hilde?! Hey Hilde!? You all right?" He called going to her room. She wasn't there, she wasn't in the bathroom, she wasn't anywhere. Now he was worried. "Duo, you'd better look at this." Margot said handing him the note. Duo's hand shook as he crumpled to his knees. "Gone? Why?" He asked tears burning behind his eyes. "Well, it was lying next to this note Duo." Margot said handing him the other letter. "You shouldn't leave love letters to women Lying about Duo." Margot said and Duo snatched the letter from Margot's grip. "I wrote it for Hilde." He said and Margot folded her arms across her chest. "Then you should have put her name on it dumbkoff! She thinks you have a girl and is gracefully making her exit." Margot said and Duo felt crushed. "Duo, have you ever actually told her how you feel about her?" Margot asked and Duo shook his head. "No, I, I didn't know how. That's why I wrote the damn letter. I wasn't done with it, that's why I haven't given it to her yet." Duo said shoving the letter into his pocket. He stood, his tall frame casting a shadow across the door way to her bedroom. At nearly nineteen, Duo was no longer the gangly young boy he had once been, but a tall, lean, and handsome young man. He walked into Hilde's bedroom and threw open her closet, everything he had ever given her, still hung within. All the things she had done to make this room hers, still lay about. Only a few bits and pieces were missing. Only the pieces she had possessed when he met her. "Au, Hilde. Where have you gone?" He asked the air as he picked up the little music box he'd given her for Christmas. Just a little trinket that played the standard "Music Box Dancer" minuet. When you wound it up, a little raven haired faerie twirled about. It had reminded him of Hilde. She was such a fragile little thing physically. Tough as iron on the inside, and full of fire, but the package itself was dainty and delicate. He adored her.

Margot leaned against the doorjamb and cleared her throat. "Men! When will you learn. Women can't read minds. If you don't tell us how you feel occasionally, we WON'T KNOW." Margot said tossing Duo his coat. "My advice Duo, go find her. And when you do, the first words out of your mouth should be. I'm an Ass. Quickly followed by I love

you come home.” Margot said as Duo caught his jacket and shrugged it on. Duo frowned at his friend. “I just don’t know why she up and left. Who does she think I’m dating?” Duo asked and knew the answer before he finished saying the question aloud. Margot crossed her arms and glared. “Never told her I’m married did you?” Margot asked and Duo shrugged “I don’t remember.” He said sheepishly. Margot growled at Duo. “You are an IDIOT Maxwell. No wonder she stiffened up every time I got near her. She thought I was your girl. Only she’s too sweet to say anything, or be rude. You don’t deserve her. Stupid fool!” Margot said walking toward the door. “I’d grovel if I were you.” She added before storming away from Duo, leaving him to run out into the night alone, in search of Hilde.

Hilde sat in the shuttle station, her face buried into her knees as she wept bitter tears. She always knew it would come to an end, but not this way. And she had always hoped beyond hope one day Duo would come to love her. She had nowhere to go and no one to turn to. Her fifteen credits would barely buy her a meal, let alone passage anywhere. So she just sat in the station so she’d have a roof over her head. “Move it Missy. No Vagrants allowed. this ain’t a flop house darlin” the security guard said prodding her with his toe. Hilde looked up and sniffed, wiping her tears with her sleeve. “I know. I’m just sitting here until I can compose myself. I’m sorry to be any trouble.” She said picking herself up off the floor and picking up her small satchel. “My heart bleeds for ya. Move along.” He said heartlessly. Hilde’s existence seemed black indeed. She had not expected this when she had woken up this morning. Now, life was a void to be endured once more. She flashed back to her days before Duo, living on the streets, stealing to survive. War Orphans, had a rough existence. She had thought those days long gone since she had found Duo. Now, having lost him, she was alone once more.

Duo walked the darkened streets of the colony looking in every shadowed corner for her. Having looked around the house, he’d realized she’d left with nothing but what he’d found her with. “Aw Hilde. Margot was right. I don’t deserve you.” Duo sighed as he stopped in front of the shuttle station. He turned and his eyes blurred with tears as he saw Hilde walking down the stairs, her head hung low. She didn’t see him there. Duo wasted no time at all, he raced over to her and threw his arms around her lifting her up off the ground to crush her in his embrace. “Hilde! Oh God Hilde don’t leave me.” Duo said into her hair as he held her tightly.

Hilde’s heart raced, he didn’t mean that the way it sounded. She told herself. “Duo, I’m just in the way.” Hilde said into his chest and Duo pulled back and fixed her with his violet gaze. “Hilde, don’t. You don’t understand. I’m the one who needs to apologize. I took you for granted, I never told you how I truly feel. Hilde, that letter you found.” He began and she looked away. He cupped her face in his hands and made her look him in the eye. “Hilde, that letter, I wrote it for you.” He said bending over, bringing his lips ever closer to hers. “For me?” She asked almost disbelieving her own ears, her heart was pound so fast. “For you. I love you Hilde. You are my Goddess of Life. You taught me how to truly live. I’m only half a man without you. Please come home.” He asked as he brushed her lips with a tender loving kiss. Hilde sighed and melted into his arms. “I love you too Duo. I never wanted to leave.” Hilde sobbed as Duo pulled her back into his protective and crushing embrace. “You mean the world to me Hilde. Please don’t ever leave me again.” He asked and Hilde nodded. “I’ll stay as long as you want me to stay Duo.” Hilde said into the material covering his chest. Her ran loving hands through her soft bluish hair and smiled down upon his beloved. “Then plan on an eternity with me.” He said lifting her chin with his finger. Their eyes met once more and closed in unison as they shared another kiss under the neon lights of the city. Hearts united in understanding at last.

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