

{THIS TALE IS TRUE} by Deborah Adams

EXCERPT

There was no time or reason for social conventions, so Juno got right to the point. “Juventas is gone,” she said simply. “No one knows her whereabouts.”

As Fama had explained, this was already common knowledge throughout Olympus and therefore failed to bring the panicked cries of disbelief and horror Juno had expected. Instead there was silence as the assembled goddesses waited for orders. It hadn’t occurred to them that Juno was depending on them for help.

“I can hardly believe it myself,” Juno went on, misreading their silence. “And yet it’s true. Someone has made away with that bright spirit, the soul of youth and grace.”

“Are you sure she hasn’t gone on vacation?” Ceres asked snidely. “And why does a wandering child necessitate such fuss and bother? No one even mentions my daughter’s regular disappearance.”

“Without Juventas,” Juno reminded them, “we are unable to complete the rebirthing. That ought to be reason enough for even you, Ceres, to sit up and take notice.”

“No one understands how a mother suffers,” Ceres whined. {Half-sprouted tulips in Houston halted their ascent toward the sun.}

“We know it’s difficult for you,” Iris leaned over and patted Ceres’ pudgy hand, “but right now we must hold ourselves together and focus on solving the immediate problem.”

Ceres moaned as if she might collapse under the weight of her grief. In stark contrast, Juno remained stoic as always, her royal obligations taking precedence over the pain that swelled inside her. “We shall apply our talents to saving ourselves. With only two days until the renewal ceremony, there’s no time to waste. We must find Juventas’ kidnapper and make a deal to retrieve her and her nectar. Otherwise...” The consequences hung liked a honed sword in the air.

“But why would someone abduct your kid?” Ceres asked. “Interfering with the renewal ceremony would be disastrous for us all! A god would have to be crazy!”

“Well, crazy behavior among Olympians isn’t unheard of,” Fama pointed out. “All that in-breeding.”

Juno halted a fireball just before it left her fingertips. It was true that most of her family’s problems resulted from incautious couplings; still, bad habits hardly explained this sort of misbehavior.