

ENCOUNTER WITH A REAPER

by Kamron Klitgaard

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A Dramatic Duet

by Kamron Klitgaard

SYNOPSIS: Temptation comes in many forms. But can we be tempted to do something that would cause us pain? Of course! When a stranger tries to tempt someone to eat the hottest pepper in the world, which would obviously cause a lot of pain, the tempted learns how desirable the opposite of pain can be.

TIME: Present day.

SET: Anywhere.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 either)

ONE (m/f) Susceptible. (57 lines)

TWO (m/f) Cunning, tricky. (58 lines)

SET: Bare

COSTUMES: Normal attire

PROPS

- A pepper
- Coin
- Surgical gloves
- Paper bag

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: Carolina reapers are not usually found in your local grocery store. But you could substitute it by using any red pepper, a plastic decorative pepper or even make one out of red play dough. The pepper doesn't have to be real. TWO (the tempter) should be slick and confident, sort of the cliched used car salesman.

SETTING: *Anywhere.*

AT START: *ONE pulls a coin out of pocket, places on thumb, flips it in the air, and catches it. Repeats. TWO enters with a paper bag and watches ONE flip the coin and catch it.*

TWO: Hey, what are ya doin'?

ONE: Just practicing.

TWO: For what?

ONE: I don't have very good hand-eye coordination. I just wanna get better.

TWO: Hmm. Hey, listen, have you ever had a Carolina reaper?

ONE: What's that?

TWO: *(Taken back.)* What's that? What's that?! It's only one of the hottest chili peppers in the world. It was created in 2001, by crossing a Pakistani naga with a red habanero from St Vincent's Island in the West Indies. So, it's very exotic. It was bred, I guess that's what you call it, in South Carolina, and it tested over 2.2 million units on that Scoville Heat Index thingy. It's bright red and has a beautiful bumpy shine to it; not like a jalapeño. And besides that, it's delicious and extremely desirable.

ONE: My doctor says I shouldn't eat spicy foods.

TWO: Doctor, shmactor. What does he know?

ONE: Well, he is a doctor.

TWO: I'll bet he hasn't even tried one himself. How would he know if he hasn't ever tried one?

ONE: I don't think his diagnosis was specific to, uh... what's it called?

TWO: Carolina reaper. I like to call 'em "reapers" for short. Isn't that a cool name? "Reaper." Hey, look at that "reaper." That "reaper" is really cool. The "reaper's" comin' for ya. Hehe.

ONE: Yeah, I guess that's a cool name.

TWO: So, you wanna try one?

ONE: No, thanks.

TWO: The thing is, it's not like a scorpion pepper, which is just a heat bomb. The Carolina reaper has flavor. It's surprisingly fruity and sweet.

ONE: That sounds pretty good.

TWO: Oh yeah. Some people dry them and then crunch them up into a powder to add to anything that needs a little kick.

ONE: I heard some guy burned a hole in his esophagus from eating super-hot peppers.

TWO: That's just an old wives' tale. The hole was actually formed by vomiting up a hamburger that had a hot puree. And that was a ghost pepper puree, so it doesn't apply here. They're so good that I heard Doritos was making a Carolina reaper chip. It comes out just in time for the Superbowl.

ONE: That would undoubtedly kill me. I have ulcers.

TWO: It will not undoubtedly kill you. If anything, it will send more blood to your brain which would activate more brain cells. You'd be smarter, with better hand-eye coordination.

ONE: Wouldn't that be nice.

TWO: It also cures headaches.

ONE: Really?

TWO: That's what I heard.

ONE: Hmm. Too bad.

TWO: What?

ONE: I don't have a headache right now.

TWO: Oh, well, you could eat one as a precautionary measure. You know, to prevent you from getting one later.

ONE: I hardly ever get headaches.

TWO: But still, is it worth the risk?

ONE: I have some Tylenol.

TWO: You know what else? There's a guy in Iowa who was trying to get into college but his grades and SAT scores were terrible. He ended up having to go to a junior college. But then he ate a reaper and all of a sudden, he's a genius.

ONE: A genius? From eating a pepper?

TWO: I guess the oils in the reaper act as flavanoids and affect cognitive functions. That's why they call it the wiz pepper.

ONE: The wiz? As in, "I got take a?"

TWO: No! As in wizard, or wizkid. You know, someone who's really smart.

ONE: They call it that?

TWO: That's what I heard.

ONE: You do make it sound intriguing.

TWO: You wanna see one?!

ONE: You have one with you?

TWO: Of course, I have one with me!

ONE: I guess it can't hurt my stomach to look at one.

TWO: That's right!

TWO opens the paper bag and pulls out a pair of surgical gloves and begins putting them on.

ONE: Uh, what are you doing?

TWO: I'm showing you the reaper.

ONE: It looks like you're putting gloves on.

TWO: Right, so I can show you the reaper.

ONE: You have to put gloves on to show me the reaper?

TWO: Uh, I don't want to contaminate it. You don't want to eat it if it has germs on it, right?

ONE: I'm not gonna eat it! I'm just gonna look at it.

TWO: Of course!

ONE: You know, maybe this isn't such a—

TWO: *(Holds up hands with gloves on.) There! (Reaches into the bag.)*
Here we go. (Pulls out a red pepper.) Take a look at this!

ONE: *(Mesmerized.)* Wow. It's so red. It's so small.

TWO: Isn't it beautiful?

ONE: It is beautiful.

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