

BILLIONS SERVED

By Jeff Dunne

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## CHARACTERS

MARLENE	A serious, disgruntled woman ready to end the human race in order to protect the Earth.
JENNY	An innocent, somewhat naïve woman who is easily convinced to join a cause.
PAY'LAY	The flamboyant, gender-fluid patron deity of prostitution (and other feel-good sports).

## SETTING

Basically anywhere, slightly before COVID.

SCENE

*(Marlene and Jenny are crouched in front of a tiki statue in a Hawaiian cave. They've just finished preparing an expensive mixture for a spell.)*

Annnd... there. Done.

MARLENE

Oh, look! It's fizzy!

JENNY

Whatever.

MARLENE

I didn't expect it to be fizzy.

JENNY

MARLENE  
What does it matter what it looks like? So long as it summons the goddess, it can look like vanilla pudding for all I care.

MARLENE

I just wasn't expecting it to, you know... fizz.

JENNY

MARLENE  
Whatever. Alright, now all we have to do is recite her name three times, and—

MARLENE

Wait.

JENNY

Jenny...

MARLENE  
*(Exasperated...)*

JENNY  
Are you sure we should really go through with this.

JENNY

Of course I'm sure.

MARLENE

JENNY  
I mean, we're talking about the destruction of all of civilization.

JENNY

MARLENE

Exhilarating, right? Now, all we need to do—

JENNY

But what if we change our minds? I mean, think about it. No more Netflix, no more Door Dash...

MARLENE

Look, Jenny. We've been through this. The human race is destroying itself. There's no reason to let it take the Earth down with it, is there?

JENNY

No, but... No more Wawas, Mar!

MARLENE

That's why we stashed four hundred hoagies in the freezer.

JENNY

Yeah, I suppose. It's just...

MARLENE

Come on, now. You can do this. We're at the last step, and I did not spend fifteen thousand dollars on crushed gemstones and exotic animal organs to be a quitter. Now, are you with me?

*(Jenny pauses, then nods in confirmation. Marlene turns to the tiki statue and intones...)*

We summon you...

JENNY AND MARLENE

Pele, Pele, Pele!! (*PAY-lay*)

*(Suddenly Pay'LAY appears. He is an old, flamboyant deity wearing a feather boa and holding a cane.)*

PAY'LAY

Well, hello gorgeous!

*(There is a stunned silence as the ladies adjust to this unexpected development.)*

Why do you look so surprised?

MARLENE  
You're... Pele (*PAY-lay*)?

PAY'LAY  
You bet your sweet buns, sexy.

JENNY  
(*At Marlene...*)  
I thought you said Pele is a goddess.

MARLENE  
She is.

JENNY  
(*To Pay'Lay*)  
You're not a goddess.

PAY'LAY  
Oooh, someone's panties are in a bunch. You're no Beyoncé yourself, sweetheart.

MARLENE  
There has to be some kind of mistake. We were trying to summon Pele (*PAY-lay*).

PAY'LAY  
(*Taking a spin to show himself off.*)  
Ta-da!

MARLENE  
You're the Goddess of Fire and Volcanos?

PAY'LAY  
Oh. I see what happened. We get this a lot. I'm Pay'Lay, with a long A sound. You were looking for Pele (*PEH-leh*). With a short E sound.

JENNY  
What are you the god of?

PAY'LAY  
Deity, honey. Please.

JENNY  
You're the god of... deity? What does that mean?

PAY'LAY

Not 'god'. I prefer the gender-neutral term. Deity. And as for 'of what', just what it sounds like, sugar.

MARLENE

Pay... Lay?

PAY'LAY

Thirty billion served, and not a single unhappy customer.

*(Pay'Lay suddenly inhales sharply like he's having a mini-orgasm.)*

Oooo, make that thirty billion and one.

MARLENE

This can't be right. We wanted the Goddess of Fire and Volcanos. That's why we used this lava totem and everything.

PAY'LAY

That's a fertility symbol.

*(Marlene turns to glare at Jenny.)*

JENNY

The cashier said—

*(Marlene points a menacing finger at Jenny.)*

MARLENE

Are you telling me that I spent my life savings to summon a.... a...

*(She looks at Pay'Lay, who flashes a smile back at her.)*

...a divine pimp?

PAY'LAY

Hey, don't knock the oldest profession in the world. And I'm not just a pimp. I'm the deity of all kinds of delightful pastimes.

*(Marlene takes a deep breath to settle herself.)*

MARLENE

Okay. Look. There's been a... a misunderstanding. Can you please go get the Goddess of Fire and Destruction.

PAY'LAY

Oh, what do you think that old bag can do that I can't?

MARLENE

Bring an end to civilization.

JENNY

We were kind of looking for an Armageddon thingy?

PAY'LAY

Who says I can't do that?

MARLENE

The kind of higher power we want doesn't need a cane.

PAY'LAY

This isn't a cane. It's a magic staff. See, this end (*he indicates the curved end*) reels 'em in, and then... (*he flips the cane around and uses it in a lewd gesture...*) this end gives 'em what they came for, if you know what I mean. And for the client wanting a little S&M, it can even—

MARLENE

We get the idea.

JENNY

We do?

MARLENE

Yes. We do.

JENNY

*(Whispered at Marlene...)*

What's S&M?

MARLENE

Anyway, I think we really want to talk to the Goddess, please.

PAY'LAY

Sorry, tootsie. No can do. One summoning per ritual.

MARLENE

But I used every cent I had for this one!

PAY'LAY

Oooo. That's a shame. (*Beat.*) But, say, if you want to make a little money, perhaps—

MARLENE

Don't even.

PAY'LAY

Was just a thought. Well, hon, since I'm already here, let's talk this through a bit. What exactly were you hoping for?

JENNY

We thought that Pele (*PAY-lay*), I mean Pele (*PEH-leh*), could cause all the volcanos on the planet to erupt, and cover the continents with lava. Can you cause eruptions?

PAY'LAY

Are you kidding? Eruptions is what I do best! (*Beat.*) Not with lava, though.

JENNY

Then what do you—

MARLENE

Jen, you need to not be the person asking questions anymore, okay?

PAY'LAY

Soooo... Why exactly are you looking to cover the planet in rock? Is this one of those fraternity pranks that Zeus and the brothers at Eye Felta Thigh are always challenging mortals with?

MARLENE

No. We... Eye Felta... Never mind. No. What we want is to put an end to civilization to keep the Earth safe from the ravages of humans.

PAY'LAY

So you're saying that you want to destroy the Earth to keep people from destroying the Earth?

MARLENE

Well, it sounds a little dumb when you say it that way.



JENNY

That's what I said!

MARLENE

Hey, no more talking for you.

*(Jenny makes a 'lips sealed' gesture. Marlene turns back to Pay'Lay.)*

Okay, if you're so smart, how would you save the planet?

PAY'LAY

Uhh, maybe... educate people?

JENNY

We tried—

*(Marlene cuts her off with a glare.)*

MARLENE

We tried that. The people doing the damage don't take education seriously. That's why we think that killing everyone is the only way.

PAY'LAY

But you don't really have a problem with *everyone*, just with the non-thinkers.

MARLENE

Yeah, I guess.

PAY'LAY

Well, I don't do floods or fires or anything. I do have a talent for communicable diseases, though.

MARLENE

I don't suppose you could come up with one that would just eliminate stupid people, could you?

*(There's a pause as Pay'Lay nods and considers...)*

PAY'LAY

Let me see what I can do.

*(Pay'Lay vanishes. The women give each other a hopeful look, and then lights out.)*