

CUPID CARDS

A SHORT LOVE STORY



The sound of clinking glasses, silver wares against ceramic plates, throaty laughter, silent conversations and slow quiet music filled the room. Jack and Jill were seated on a table at the right wing of Cupid Restaurant.

Cupid Restaurant was located at the heart of the city and it was almost impossible not to notice the magnificent building especially at that time of the year. It was 7 days to valentine and Mr. Harry and his wife Victoria outdid themselves again. The building was draped with glowing bulbs and red roses with white stripes were placed at strategic points in flower vases. The billboard in front of the restaurant was revamped with glowing bulbs and stringed roses.

Everything took on a new look except the annual game of cards. Everyone believed that the game of cards could reveal the future of their already existing relationship or one they hoped for. Harry and Victoria took their first shot at loving themselves after this game of cards. Harry was a worker at Cupid Bar when it was managed by Joseph and Rita. After Harry married Victoria, Joseph and Rita thought it wise to sell the bar to the newlyweds since they were too old to run the place. After running the bar for 3 years, they decided to turn it into a restaurant.

Every card had different inscriptions and every pack had different tasks. The packs were expected to be picked randomly as this was the fun and mystery of the game. A pack contained seven different cards with specific tasks for the seven different days before valentine. Each card had a wrap and on the wrap, the day was specified with the instruction: **“A CARD A DAY”**.

This was Jack and Jill’s first valentine together and theirs was not going to be different. They were definitely playing the cupid card. They had known each other for ten months and overtime, things got very intense between them. Sooner than they expected, they were very exclusive yet remained friends. They decided to make the most of this valentine so they reserved a table at Cupid Restaurant and picked a pack of cards.

DAY 1- 8th February

“Life is like a seaport; people come and others go”- Anonymous

How did you meet?

When Jack saw the card, he smirked. He’ll never forget the first day he saw Jill. Jill came for an early morning mass on a Sunday morning and it was the first time he was seeing her. She came while the epistle was being read so she had to wait outside for the epistle to be over before the sides’ warden would lift the pew rope.

The sides' warden was Jack. Their eyes met for a brief second and then Jill looked away. He knew there was something about her but he just couldn't tell what it was. After church, she disappeared so he couldn't even talk to her.

Jack was in his final year in medical school and he belonged to the "Blue-Age society". It was a voluntary organization whose goal was to give back to the society. Coincidentally, Jill joined the society and Jack was her mentor. Initially, when the mentor-protégé relationship started, it was plain. Jack's first assignment with her was to take her on a tour round the school. He didn't really see anything striking about her. To him, she was just a tall plain girl.

One month after taking her on the campus tour, Jack had an accident and was hospitalized. Jill called and that was their first time talking after the campus tour. After a while she chatted him up; Jack only responded because he felt obliged to answer her. After all, she was his protégé. Jack noticed the weird write-ups Jill had on her different social media pages and got really interested in his protégés' life. Their chats became more frequent and their supposed friendship became a lot more interesting.



At the end of day 1, they were very excited and couldn't wait for the next day. They were tempted to have a peek at the next card but knew it would only spoil the fun. So to keep the fire burning, they agreed to follow the rules despite the very active flutter in their stomach.

DAY 2- 9th February

Finally, a new day, a new question. Jill had a new blow-out and looked exceptionally beautiful. She did it to get Jack's attention and she did.

"It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearance"- Oscar Wilde

What was the first thing you noticed about each other?

Asides Jill's weird nature, Jack also noticed the way she cared effortlessly. There was something so pure and unscathed about her. She had a fierce spirit and good organizational characteristics. She was obviously a perfectionist; a loving but pretty quick tempered girl with very low resilience. She looked tough but very easy to fine tune; a pure emotional bag.

Jack on the other hand was a happy-go-lucky person. He looked out for everyone but himself. He was very stubborn and never settled for less. He had a

very fierce spirit and believed beyond every reasonable doubt that he was going to make a difference in the world.



At the end of day 2s' exercise, their adrenaline was already high from the excitement of what the remaining days held.

DAY 3- 10th February

“Talk to a man about himself and he will listen for hours”- Benjamin Disraeli

What quality did you fall in love with?

The game was becoming intense and Jack was getting scared. There were waters he never intended touching and now; these cards were going there. Jill on the other hand was tense but ready to get to the last card.

Jill fell in love with the selfless Jack. She loved his organizational abilities and the fact that he could carry everybody along. Initially, she thought he was perfect and very honest.

Jack fell in love with the very caring Jill and her sheer innocence. He loved her organizational abilities and thought she had all the qualities of his ideal woman.



It was a quick one and it wasn't as hard as they thought. They stared intently into each other's eyes to find the tiniest courage but they couldn't. One thing was sure, they were about to count their blessings.

DAY 4- 11th February

“To try and find out the reason for everything is very dangerous and leads to nothing but disappointment”- Queen Victoria

What are your greatest fears about relationships?

“Seriously? Cupid cards had to ask what my greatest fears are” Jack thought to himself. He was known for his strong disposition and he wasn't ready to let his wall down especially not around Jill; but on a second thought, they agreed to play this game honestly and they will.

Jacks greatest fears were; making commitments he knew he was not ready to keep, starting a relationship and then ending up with the person involved out of

pity, Jill not fitting into his future and finally getting married to the wrong woman and not being able to live out his dream of a happy home.

Jill's fears were; ending up with the wrong man, investing her emotions in futile relationships, loving so hard and having to let go at the end and finally, losing herself in someone else.

For Jill, things were getting pretty intense. After hearing Jack voice out his fears, she didn't know what to expect again. She felt nauseous and left immediately the game was over.

DAY 5- 12th February

“The more you find out about life, the uglier everything seems”- Frank Zappa

Roll the dice

They were surprised at the turn of events; from answering bizarre questions to rolling a dice. The pack had a card that read:

Roll the dice to find out the fate of your relationship.

- 1 Uncertain
- 2 Definitely
- 3 Not for long
- 4 Not at all
- 5 Uncertain
- 6 Definitely

RULE: Roll the dice seven times alternatively. The second and the seventh result should tally. If it doesn't, repeat the exercise.

At least they didn't have to answer weird questions today. Jill went to school today wishing the evening wouldn't come because she wasn't looking forward to answering anymore questions as she was yet to recover from the answers she got the previous day.

Jack rolled the dice first and got a 6. Jill quickly checked to know what 6 signified. Immediately she saw it, the sick feeling in her stomach disappeared.

Jill rolled the dice the second time and got a 3. Immediately her eyes popped but there was something very calm about Jack's look.

Jack rolled the dice for the third time and got a 1. They looked at each other for a brief moment and Jill picked the dice.

Jill rolled the dice the fourth time and got a 2. This game had a way of keeping her on her toes but she wasn't about to chicken out of this game now.

Jack rolled the card for the fifth time and got a 2. Of course this was just a means of pinching his emotions. He'll not let a simple dice knock him out of his game.

Jill rolled the dice for the sixth time and got a 4. "Seriously?" she thought to herself. She could feel that nauseous feeling returning. She prayed really hard that this last round will not tally with the second result so that they'll have to repeat the exercise.

Jack rolled the dice for the seventh time and got a 3. They looked at each other intently for about 2 minutes. Tears welled up in their eyes because they knew it was game over

Jack stretched his hand across the table to Jill and she took it. He begged her to follow through with the game till Valentines' day. He told her that she was his first true love and had never felt this way until she came into his life. Jill agreed ignoring the obvious ache in her heart. She left Cupid restaurant very sick and pale.

DAY 6- 13th February

"The thought that we are enduring the unendurable is one of the things that keep us going"- Molly Haskell

Pop the pill or leave

Today the blue skies were gray, the birds that sang carols were nowhere to be found, the butterflies were gone and to worsen it, it felt like she had stones in her shoes.

Jill was not taking this lightly. From the moment they voiced their fears about relationships, Jill hadn't been able to swallow any solid food. She had a test earlier in the day and she used all her energy to prepare for the test; yet, she knew she didn't give it her best shot. She was losing her mind.

Their table looked different today. There were 2 small packs in the day 6 pack besides the note. The packs contained pills; 2 red pills and 2 blue pills.

The inscription on the blue pills' pack read: **"Mistakes are a part of our lives but letting our mistakes govern our future decisions is not an option. Pop the blue pill, ease the pain and walk away"**

The inscription on the red pills' pack read: **“One of the hardest things to do in life is letting go so we decide to move on with our obvious nemesis and ignore the consequences. Pop the red pill and unlock the circle of flames”**

Jill wanted to pick the blue pill when Jack stopped her. He put his hand over her hand, looked into her hurting eyes, stood up from his seat, gently pulled her up, and kissed her passionately. Jill felt a sharp pain in her heart and at the same time, warmth on her skin. She couldn't explain what was happening to her but she didn't feel good at all. Looking intently into her eyes, Jack begged her to pop the red pill with him. His reasons were; he loved her dearly, he didn't want to be with any other person the next day and that they've come too far to back out now.

Together, they popped the red pill. As soon as they swallowed the red pill, they felt a sharp pain in their stomach. Tears welled up in Jill's eyes because besides the pain she felt in her stomach, she knew that this charade was not for long. Jack saw the distress on Jill's face, pulled her to himself, embraced her and assured her that he'll always be there for her.

DAY 7- 14th February

It was Valentine day and the whole atmosphere was filled with love. The street was filled with happy people and people went about their businesses without a single bother. The workers at Cupid Restaurant were in a very festive mood and they worked very hard because they were all booked.

Jack arrived 30 minutes earlier than Jill so he sat and waited for her over a cup of cappuccino. When Jill arrived, people stopped for a brief moment to look at her. She looked heavenly. She wore a red mini dress that revealed her long, straight and spotless legs; and a pair of glass heels. She wore glittery silver earrings that sparkled when light shone on them; with a matching necklace. She let her dark shiny straight hair fall over her shoulders. She wore a light makeup so it was difficult to tell where her face ended and where her makeup began. Her nails were neatly done and she wore a very feminine perfume. She looked like Cinderella in a mini dress.

She walked gracefully to where Jack sat. He stood up and had a closer look at her. He was blown away by her beauty. He hugged her very passionately and sniffed her neck. He didn't want to let go but the night was still too young to get emotional.

A worker in Cupid Restaurant walked them to their circle of flames. As soon as they stepped into the circle, the entrance shut and the flames increased. They were alone with a dressed table that had; a flower vase, a bucket of champagne, two champagne flutes and the last card. They sat down facing each other. Looking intently at each other, Jack picked the card and unwrapped it.

“Definition has no substitute: no matter the situation, choose definition over vagueness”- Adene Chris

Welcome to the circle of flames

What have you not told yourselves?

Upon seeing this, Jill froze in her seat. It was enough that she could barely feel herself. She thought today was going to be drama free but it looked like it had the most drama. When she became exclusive with Jack, there were things she found out and swore to herself not to tell him. Now here she was numb as an ice and with absolutely nothing to lose; she decided to tell him.

When they decided to come clean about their feelings for each other, Jill became suspicious of Jack but didn't want to ask him anything so she tried letting go. During one of her Spanish classes, she met a girl named Anna. They became friends. One day Anna made mention of Jack; Jill's Jack. She talked about the times Jack invited her over to his house; the same house he invited Jill to. Jill was broken because Jack made it look like it was just her; no one else. She couldn't even tell Anna that she had “a thing” with Jack. When Jill was still trying to process the whole “Anna information”, she met a girl at the book club. She was also in her final year in medical school. She kept talking about how this guy professed love to her and when she showed her the picture of this guy, it was Jack. She felt bad but she pardoned him because the girl said it was months before Jack came clean about his feelings for her but he was giving her signals that he really liked her. The final straw that broke the camel's back was when Jill found out about Mathilde. Mathilde looked just like Jill; tall, slim, and the same skin tone as Jill. The night he told Jill that she didn't fit into his future, he went home and texted Mathilde telling her how he fell for her. Mathilde was Jill's good friend.

Jack was pale. He never knew that Jill knew all of these. What he didn't understand was why she was still with him. At that point, he realized that he exploited Jill's innocence. Jill could be anything but not a cheat; it was either she loved or she didn't. The ball of mass he rolled up the hill was rolling down uncontrollably towards him and was about to crush him. He couldn't help but imagine how many of his “fling-things” Jill was aware of. He had mistaken a

queen for a pawn and he got checkmated. He realized that he had created a dragon out of the innocent little puppy he met 10 months ago and she was about to rain fire on him. He had nothing to say.

Jill reminded him that it was a huge risk to sail on the high sea without a life jacket. She looked intently at him and jumped out of the circle of flames. Due to the height and intensity of the flames' heat, Jill got badly burnt. As soon as she jumped out, she regurgitated the red pill and she spat it out. After that, she felt peace. She knew that no matter the pain in her gastrointestinal system or the scalds on her skin; with time and the right association, she would heal. With that, Jill staggered out of Cupid restaurant leaving Jack alone in the circle of flames.