

Aries

By Imani A. Redman

## CHARACTERS

- ARIES            The leader of one of the many rebel groups formed when the war began. Smart. Strong. A great leader. Acts on impulse and carries the weight of the world on his shoulders. Male, 20, any race.
- LANA            The new girl to the group of young rebels. Pretty, sharp tongued, witty, strong, a strategist, can stand her ground, yet is not overwhelming. Female, 18, any race.

SCENE:

The middle of the forest, outside an abandoned building.

TIME:

An apocalyptic world, no electricity, only natural light and resources.

ACT I

SCENE 1

*(The walls are worn, made of bricks. charcoal graffiti masks the wall. roots come from the cracks in the wall as well as through the broken window. It's windy in autumn. sometimes the wind is howling so loud you have to scream to be heard over it. )*

*(As the curtain rises, Aries is standing looking off into the distance, as if perplexed by something. Lana enters behind him, unnoticed, and jumps on Aries' back.)*

ARIES

What the-

*(He pulls his sword out, throwing Lana off his back and to the ground.)*

LANA

It's me. New chick, as you call me.

ARIES

The hell! Don't do shit like that.

*(She rises.)*

LANA

You need to lighten up.

ARIES

You need to lose some weight. How old are you?

LANA

Eighteen years.

ARIES

Last time I checked that is not a child.

LANA

Aries-

ARIES

I could have killed you right there and then. Where's the other girls?

LANA

3 facts. Once again my name is Lana. 2. I know you need to stop yelling. 3. They will be here.

ARIES

You don't understand. Where. Are. They?

LANA

They look at least sixteen years. You don't think that they'll be fine?

ARIES

They were supposed to be back by now.

LANA

You're so-

ARIES

So what?

LANA

Uptight.

*(She looks at her pocket watch.)*

ARIES

Is that a habit?

LANA

What?

ARIES

You've checked that several times since you've joined us a few days ago. *(Beat.)* One day you'll look at that thing and it will have stopped ticking.

LANA

One day. *(She closes it.)* Not today.

ARIES

How'd you end up in the forest?

LANA

The one you found me in a few days ago?

ARIES

We are in the same one currently, but yes.

LANA

That particular situation was a mixture of bad luck, stupidity, bad timing, and making some, a lot, of the wrong people mad.

ARIES

I remember being in those types of situations.

LANA

You're speaking as if you're so much older than me.

ARIES

Two years older to be precise. I'm also mentally older.

LANA

Really? You don't look it.

ARIES

Of course I don't look it. The circumstances of my situations have worked in coherence to age me mentally quicker than most *Homo sapiens*.

LANA

Wow, that's almost understandable.

ARIES

I'm always understandable.

*(He rises. He looks into the distance as if searching for something or someone. Then he begins to pace. A gong rings twice. Aries sighs heavily.)*

ARIES

There's something wrong with that thing. It's rung twice and I doubt the hour's even up yet.

LANA

You sure?

ARIES

I think I'd notice. *(Beat.)* Now would be a good time to check your watch thing.

LANA

I literally just checked it. And I don't trust it.

ARIES

Was anyone following you?

LANA

Just now? No, no. I just felt like running?

ARIES

You run? For pure entertainment.

LANA

No I have my reasons. I mean think about it. If you're fighting someone, in the midst of all the adrenaline and heat the adrenaline will wear off. When it's gone all you have is your stamina. The person who wins is the person who has the will to continue.

ARIES

Stamina is unnecessary if you're naturally stronger than your opponent.

LANA

And if you aren't?

ARIES

I always am.

LANA

Is that the mentality your friend Gabriel had? Look where it got him.

ARIES

*(Under his breath.)* Dead.

LANA

Never underestimate anyone, Aries.

ARIES

You might be forgetting one key thing. There are no rules in war.

LANA

I know anything goes. As long as it goes my way.

ARIES

I'm going to look for them.

LANA

No, you're not.

*(She grabs his arms. They lock eyes. Aries breaks her grip angrily, but stays.)*

Aries

Where could they be?

LANA

Coming. I know they are. Why lose trust now? They're probably just lighting fires. They're old enough to know what they're doing.

ARIES

You ever try taking care of something. Nurturing it. Taking full responsibility for it. Then letting it down?

LANA

My balloon. More like letting it up.

ARIES

You have one odd sense of humor.

LANA

I mean like letting it go into the sky. I have this problem with letting things go too easily.

ARIES

I mean more so having something, and dropping it. Like gaining its trust, it crashes harder than it ever could have if you had just let it be. You love something more than you could describe. But it was like you almost didn't have the right to love it that way. Gabriel's death was my fault. Their deaths were because of me. What is there left of a legacy I had thought I wanted to leave behind now? I can feel the world turning against me. The sky is waiting to fall and touch the concrete but I'm holding it on my shoulders. How many slit throats will I have to witness before the burden falls onto someone else. How many rivers will have bodies floating in them before I cannot know the names of every carcass I pass.

LANA

Wow you know something... *(Pause.)* You talk too much. Aries, you can't blame yourself for any of this.

ARIES

I definitely won't say I had nothing to do with it.

LANA

You saved those kids from leaping through trash cans. You gave them a dream, something to fight for that isn't their next meal. Aries, you deserve better. If you're seeking approval, I can't give that to you.

ARIES

Don't bother. You need your strength for other things. *(Beat.)* They probably haven't found anything.

LANA

How do you ooze confidence and strength and wisdom, yet you're so pessimistic?

ARIES

How hard is it to light a fire and find some usable wood? We are in the middle of a forest.

LANA

More pessimism! See you've got to believe they found a cart or something full of wood and lighters, right? Or maybe just cut down the whole freaking tree.

ARIES

*(Aries chuckles but tries to stifle it.)*

We're surrounded by trees...

LANA

Yes, but, I'm just going to be quiet now.

ARIES

*(He laughs for a beat then becomes solemn once again.)*

You should trust I have my reasons to be pessimistic.

LANA

I've never denied that you have your reasons.

ARIES

May be a surprise, but wars change people, along with power, money.

LANA

Oh, I'm aware.

ARIES

You should make an oath to me right now you won't become that way.

LANA

What way?

ARIES

Don't be like me. This all has changed me. I've paid some hard debts for my actions, I'll admit that. I've lost...

LANA

I can try my best.

ARIES

Don't let me fail you... Good enough. You'll be good for us. I hope.

LANA

Hope. That's a step in the right direction right?

ARIES

I guess it is. You might actually be of some value to our group.

LANA

Might?

ARIES

You will be. I hope.

LANA

Two hopes is better than one.

ARIES

Oh no, don't hurt yourself. They'll be here?

LANA

Yes. Yes. Yes.

ARIES

I'm trusting you.

LANA

*(Aside)* That's all I'm asking.