

Marah Woolf: DivineSpark – Don't Love Me

YA Fiction/Romantasy Age 14+

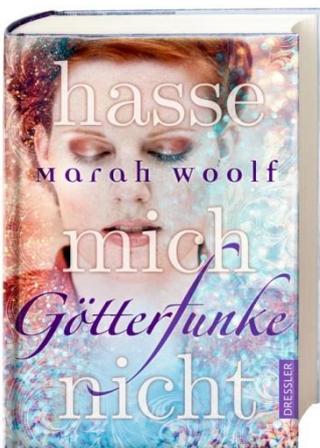
464 pages

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Sometimes dreams do come true! For this summer, Jess had really only planned a couple of lazy weeks in the Rocky Mountains. But then she meets good-looking Cayden, the boy with the emerald-green eyes, and he steals her heart away. But Cayden has his own agenda. He's the son of a god and has made a pact with Zeus: only if he can find a girl able to resist his charms will Zeus grant Cayden's dearest wish: to finally become mortal. Will Cayden play to win his game with the gods even if it costs Jess her heart? .

A top title from one of the most successful self-publishers, now for the first time with a German publishing house!

DivineSpark is the ideal blend of dream material for the target readership: a deep, world-encompassing love that must not be, a self-assured heroine, and a (seemingly) inaccessible hero every girl reading this story will sigh for.



Book 2: DivineSpark – Don't Hate Me



Book 3: DivineSpark – Don't Leave Me

Reading Extract - Translated by Rebecca Heier

Rules of the Divine Contest

The following rules have been established and are unalterable for all eternity.

Every one hundred years Zeus will accord Prometheus the opportunity to attain mortality.

The king of the gods will determine the location of the contest.

Athena, the goddess of wisdom, will choose the girl for whom Prometheus must fight as though he wished to win her.

Should this girl give herself to Prometheus within a period of sixty days, he will lose the contest and remain immortal.

Should she spurn him, however, Zeus will make him a common mortal.

Zeus will permit Prometheus three attempts within each sixty-day period.

All participants solemnly swear to abide by the rules of this contest, to fight fairly, and never to lie or to engage in any type of deception.

Curious, I looked around as we walked to the main lodge. The paths between the cabins bustled with activity. We were constantly having to make way for heavy-duty golf carts with camp employees and small groups of students. From one of the larger buildings came shrieks and the *pong* of tennis-table balls.

"God, is this ever steep! moaned Robyn.

"Well, you're in the mountains," I couldn't help replying.

"Do we have to walk to the main lodge for every meal, or do they have a delivery service?"

"Oh, sure, just say the word and they'll bring it to your cabin door."

"For what this camp costs, it's the least they could do."

"You read what it said on the website. 'Share an unforgettable experience in the American

West as it used to be, in pristine surroundings, combined with a wide variety of activities.' Do you think the first settlers got their food delivered on silver platters?"

Robyn looked at me in horror. "I hope I don't have to shoot anything or go out in the forest to gather nuts and berries."

I grinned. "It didn't say anything about that, but who knows for sure?"

"What in the world did I let myself get conned into?" But she gamely trudged on.

My guilty conscience stirred. This camp in the middle of nowhere had been my idea. Normally, Robyn decided where we went. But not this time, even though her parents had paid the camp fees for both of us. My mom could never have afforded it.

"And anyway, you talked Cameron and Josh into coming along with us. Although Europe would have been way more exciting, no doubt."

[...] Wistfully, I looked up at the tops of the pine trees. It was probably our last summer together. That's why the guys had decided to come along with us. Next year we'd all graduate and then go off to college in different places. Already, I dreaded not being able to see my friends every day. Robyn wanted to go to Harvard, while I had to try to get into a college in San Francisco. Then I could commute from my little hometown, Monterey. I'd keep my job in the pizzeria and be able to live at home with my mom and my little sister. Robyn had begged me to go with her to Boston. She'd actually had crying jags, but this time I'd held firm. Of course, it wasn't as if I'd really had a choice. Robyn would be okay by herself, but not Phoebe.

So I really wanted to enjoy this last summer with my friends. Who knew when we'd be able to spend so much time together again? Only one more year of school before the three of them would go out into the big, wide world, while I'd stay behind at home, chained to my family. My father had left us, so I couldn't very well dodge my responsibility for the two of them; I couldn't abandon them, too. I was still trying hard to tell myself it didn't matter.

My phone rang as we came panting up to the main lodge.

"It's Phoebe," I said, looking at the display. "You can go on inside."

"I'll order us something to drink." Robyn disappeared through the swinging doors.

"Phoebe? Anything wrong?"

My little sister laughed. "Nothing bad. Don't always worry so much."

"Then why are you calling? We made a deal that you'd only call in emergencies. I almost had a heart attack."

"It *is* an emergency."

I sat down on a tree stump.

"Well then, don't keep me in suspense."

"I've got the lead," whispered Phoebe excitedly. "In the summer theater."

"Really?" I wanted to hug her.

"Yes!" she squealed. "I'm going to dance Odette. Can you imagine? I have to hang up now. Gotta practice. Love you."

"Love you more."

For a moment I stared at the dark display.

I hadn't asked her how Mom was doing.

I had an immediate attack of guilt, but I quickly pushed the thought out of my mind. My sister was dancing her very first lead role. I couldn't believe it.

There was a real fighter in that skinny little body of hers. When she put her mind to something, she succeeded at it. No matter how much her feet bled. She'd be the most fantastic Odette ever.

My chest swelling with pride, I'd started following Robyn when a sheet of water hit me. I stopped dead in my tracks. A white Volvo had driven through the biggest of the puddles that had formed in the dips in the road. Oblivious, the driver simply kept on. Stunned, I looked after the car. It stopped in front of the check-in entry, right in the middle of the road. Couldn't the idiot park like a normal person? Did he have to block the way? That was even worse than where Robyn had parked. The driver got out and looked around.

"Are you nuts?" I yelled over. My tube top was sticking to my skin and my hair was hanging in my face. I must have looked like one of the Furies.

The boy who'd been driving turned to look at me. Green eyes regarded me attentively. It was impossible. I stood and stared at him. Those were the same eyes. His eyes. The eyes from my dream, and now I knew what the rest of him looked like, too. My assumption of "outrageously good" had been woefully inadequate.

"You?" I rasped, and immediately bit my tongue.

He'd think I was crazy if I asked him what he'd been doing in my dream, and I wouldn't have blamed him. It sounded like the corniest come-on line ever.

He cocked his head and propped his arm on the roof of the car. He looked at me expectantly. I wasn't mistaken, because those eyes were unmistakable. This boy had persuaded someone to reunite my soul with my body. A creepy image, but above all completely idiotic, I reminded myself. I had to pull myself together.

Desperately, I tried to regain my equilibrium and not to think about how my skin had tingled under his touch. I couldn't accuse a complete stranger of strolling through my dream.

"You got me soaked," was my lame substitution. "With your fancy car. Just look what you've done."

His gaze strayed over my body. It felt like time was standing still. I hadn't wanted him to look at me *that* closely. I took a deep breath. Maybe in the future I should consider wearing a bra under my tube tops, even though, unfortunately, there wasn't all that much to support. But who'd have thought that that little piece of material would wind up stuck to my skin? I angrily crossed my arms over my chest. "Normally, a person stops and says they're sorry."

"I'm sorry. Didn't you see the car coming?" he asked with a warm voice.

It was the same voice. No mistaking it.

What had the boy in my dream been wearing, anyway? I hadn't noticed. I hadn't seen anything but his eyes and hands. The boy here was wearing black jeans and a dark shirt, untucked,

that did only a middling job of concealing his muscular body and flat stomach. Above all, though, the shirt was clean, without a trace of blood or saliva. This guy had obviously not been kneeling in the mud and holding a bloody corpse in his arms.

Still, I could have sworn it was the same boy. If I could just smell him, I'd know for sure. Whoa – smell him? I shook my head, hoping that the screwball ideas would fall out. Smell him? Umm, yeah, right. The dirty water must have turned my brain to mush.

"I don't have eyes in the back of my head!" I snorted.

The guy was a total jerk. Not at all like the boy in my dream. Nevertheless, his eyes flustered me and somehow made me want to throw myself into his arms so he could protect me. Pah! Of all the hare-brained ideas! As if I needed some guy to protect me. Quickly, I fixed my eyes on another point – the top button on his shirt. But that wasn't much better because now I had a direct view of the hollow at the base of his throat, which transitioned seamlessly into a smooth chest.

"Next time don't stand out in the middle of the road talking on the phone," he explained. "Something much worse could happen. You could die."

Incredulous, I opened my mouth. Had he just talked about dying? It must have been coincidence. IT WASN'T HIM! I put my hands on my hips. "So now it's MY fault?"

"You said it, not me. I'm just asking you to be more careful in the future." He got something out of the car, came over to me and put a jacket around my shoulders. "You should change clothes; otherwise you'll catch cold."

That was it – the proof. The jacket smelled liked the boy in the dream. Overwhelmed by the shock, I swooned a little, but he clasped my upper arms to hold me steady. There couldn't be a mistake. Was I maybe still dreaming? I looked up at him. His well-proportioned face was directly over mine. There were little dimples in his cheeks. He bent down to me and I felt his breath on my lips.

"I know you," I whispered, although I felt like shouting. No doubt I was losing my mind.

He let go of me as though he'd burned himself. Then he shook his head, but I saw

uncertainty flicker up in his eyes. Without another word he turned around and ran up the stairs to the reception desk.

I could only stare after him with my mouth gaping.

"He really didn't see you," said a woman's voice – and she sounded rather amused. My mouth snapped shut. Two other people had been standing next to the car, watching our verbal sparring match. Where had they come from? Obviously, I'd only had eyes for the other boy. My cheeks burned.

"He was just a little distracted." The girl looked at me.

Was she his girlfriend? Lucky her!

"It was the first time he'd ever driven a car," said the black-haired boy next to her, leaning casually against the car, arms crossed on the top. He winked at me. "I'd have done a better job, but neither of these two trusted me with this steel stink-bomb. Even though nobody drives a chariot better than I do."

I glanced back and forth from one to the other. "Well, okay, I'd better be going. I pushed back my damp hair. "See you around."

"You better believe it," answered the boy.

I turned away, pulled the jacket closer around me, and paused to think: two boys and a girl. Exactly like in my dream. Was it just a coincidence?

Sample Translation

by Rebecca Heier