

IDLE WOMEN: EPILOGUE

By pwatson1974

Sunday, after a day and a half of doing housework and cooking, all with the dubious help of another head fighting for control of their body. “Ok, this has been fun and all, but how do we get back to being two separate people again, Lise? I can’t go to work like this tomorrow!”

“Uhm, I guess we just pull the pieces off. That’s what Peter does when he’s finished putting me back together wrong.”

“You guess?”

“Hey, give me a break. This is the first time I’ve done this with someone else.”

“Ok, ok, what shall we try first?”

“Let’s just try putting our little toes back. Something nice and small.” Ola nods and reaches out for her feet. The feet float over the bed towards them. Ola stares at them.

“I am never going to get used that, L. Never.”

“But you can get used to sharing, can you?”

“Yeah. If it always feels that good, it could become a regular deal.”

“Maybe.” As the feet settle down, their hand reaches out for their little toe. She pinches it in her long, chequered fingers and pulls. The toe remains stubbornly attached to her pale foot. “Uhm...”

“It doesn’t seem to be coming off, Lisa. Any other brilliant ideas?”

“Well, the way we got them in the first place might work.”

“Ok. And if that doesn’t work?”

“We keep phoning Peter on his mobile ‘til he answers. Then we wait for him to stop laughing and hope he doesn’t feel too playful when he comes over to restore us. But let’s try this first. If we have to let Peter sort this out, I’ll never hear the end of it.” The light sabre floats towards them. “I’ll just cut off your big toe and then we can put it back where it belongs and get us both back to normal.” Lisa carefully lines up the edge of the light sabre’s glowing blue blade with her big toe and pushes it slowly through. Her big toe falls off onto the bed.

“Uhm, Lisa?”

“Ya?”

“You missed a bit.”

“What do you mean, I missed a...” Ola bends them forward and points at the thin strip of pale milky flesh still on the edge of her foot. “Shit. We’ll never be able to get the cuts lined up exactly. If we even flinch slightly, it’ll leave a bit behind.” Ola reaches for the phone.

“Looks like you’re just going to have to learn to live with the humiliation, L.”

“Alright, alright, I’ll phone him. Geez.” She clicks the autodial number for Peter’s mobile. After several rings that seem to go on forever, someone answers.

“Hey, Lisa. What’s up? How’d you and Ola get on last night?”

“Uhm, yeah, about that, there’s been something of a, little accident, there.”

“What? Are you ok?”

“Oh, we’re fine.”

“Sort of.” Ola adds.

“Hey, Ola.”

“Peter, Ola and I could really use your help here.”

“Uh-huh.”

“We sort of need you here sooner than now.”

“What’s wrong?”

“We’ve got something of a problem involving your present.”

“My, what sort of problem? Ola doesn’t know about it, does she?”

“Uhm, you could say that.”

“Lisa, just tell me what you’ve done. She didn’t find you on the bed, did she?”

“Uhm, yeah, but the problem’s a bit more serious than that.”

“I’ll be right over.”

“Tha” Peter appears in the corner of the room, stepping out of the shadows, behind them, “nks.”

“Oh, shit. You really have got a problem, haven’t you?” Lisa and Ola yelp as one, leaping up.

“Peter! Don’t do that!”

“Sorry. Do you think you could tell me what happened here?”

“Well, I was exhausted when you left, so I guess I sort of drifted back to sleep. Ola came in when I was sill sort of groggy, and in pieces. And then we sort of got carried away.”

“Wonderful. So you’ve been like this since when? Yesterday morning? That’s bad. That is very bad.”

“Tell me about it.”

“Oh, not this. That’ll be pretty easy to fix.”

“It will? So what’s the problem? Get on and do it.”

“Fine. But you’re not going to like it.”

“What do you mean I’m not going to like it?”

“Hello? Someone else is in the room, you know?”

“Sorry, Ola. But you’re gonna have it even worse than Lise.”

“What? Why?”

“Ola, look at me.”

“Huh?” Ola looks up and meets Peter’s eyes. Her eyes glaze over, her jaw hanging slack.

“What did you do to her?”

“I’ll explain when I’ve sorted this, ok?”

“No, it’s not ok. It is very far from being fucking ok! You’ve just done something to my best friend without even asking! I want to know what! I want to know why! And I want to know now!”

“Don’t shout, Lisa. I’ll tell you when I’m done, but I really need to get on with this.” He starts picking up the various pieces the girls left lying around the room, piecing them together to make a patchwork woman in the opposite colour scheme and without a head. He places the woman just in front of Lisa and Ola’s body. “Now, just step forward.”

“Peter, there’s a body in the way.”

“Just step forward. It’ll be fine.” Lisa takes a tentative step forward. The other body seems to melt around her, flowing all over her body, sinking deep into her skin and right down into her bone. She emerges from the other side and shivers, feeling cold after the warmth of being inside someone else, even if half of the someone else was her. She looks back and finds Ola still standing stiffly, her head lolling on her fully restored body. She also notes that Ola is still wearing the clothes they’d found that fitted their piecemeal body. Which meant that she was standing in the room, totally naked.

“Peter! You had better have a really good explanation for this.”

“I think I have. Ok, quick history lesson. Last time the general public became convinced magic was real, there was a few little thing called the Inquisition, the Witch Trials and the Witch Finder General. Since then, we, that is, other magicians, witches and the like, have been very, and I mean very, careful about letting people know what’s going on. At any one time, we’re only allowed to let one other person know. And for me, that person is you. And now Ola knows. Which is a very, very bad thing. And now, I’ve got three choices: I can let this rest, and let the Conclave deal with it, and none of us will like that; I can pull the knowledge out of your head, but that’s going to be difficult ‘cause I’ll have to rewire the last few months; or, I can wipe it out of Ola’s mind, which should be easier and less dangerous, because I only have to muddle up this weekend, and as you two had a night out planned, not being able to remember things clearly won’t be totally unexpected, so she shouldn’t resist it much..”

“What do you mean let the Conclave handle it? Who’s the Conclave?”

“The Conclave Adepti, they’re sort of a set of community leaders and police force for the magical community. And they are judge, and jury, and, if necessary, executioner, too. They’ll be a lot less gentle than I will, too, because they won’t care if they cause you serious harm because the most important thing for them is protecting the secret. So will you let me get on with it? Please?”

“You’re not...”

“I am dead serious, Lise. Once I’m done, we’ll talk.”

“Oh, you can bet on that.” Lisa mutters as she retrieves a new set of clothes from her wardrobe. She turns back to find Peter flipping the top of Ola’s head open. “What are you doing?”

“Just trying to fix this. Could you go and fill up the sink with warm water, please? I’ll need it in a little while.”

“What? Oh, sure.” She scoots across the hall.

A few minutes later, Peter leads Ola into the bathroom. “Could you get me a bar of soap? It’ll need to be a whole one, really.”

“Ok, what are you going to do?”

“Wash Ola’s brain clean of the last couple of days.”

“What??”

“You’ll see.”

“Can’t you just magic it away?”

“Possibly, but I concentrate better if I can do the whole thing like a trick.”

“You need one of those things from Men In Black.”

“Good plan. I’ll have to come up with one when I get a chance. And no, I definitely won’t let you borrow it; you’d cause mayhem. Now can I have that soap?”

“Here.”

“Thanks. Now, whatever happens next, don’t make a fuss ‘til it’s over, all right? I’m going to need to concentrate for this to work.”

“Ok. I’ll be in my...”

“No, I’ll need your help filling in the gaps for Ola.”

Peter puts the soap down beside the sink and flips back Ola’s scalp. He reaches in, and carefully lifts her brain out of her head, lowering it into the warm water. He grabs the soap, covering his hands in lather before picking up the brain and rubbing the soap on her frontal lobes. He rinses his hands, washing the brain gently to clear off the soap before he towels the brain dry and pops it back into Ola’s head before closing it up. “Right. That’s the weekend pretty thoroughly scrambled up in her head. She’ll remember it as a dream, but you’re going to have to provide a few details to her about your weekend out, so she won’t just have this jumbled gap in her memories.”

“How do I do that?”

“Just make something up and give her the bare details of what your story is. She’ll fill in the details herself. Just make sure you say how thoroughly bladdered she got; it’ll make the jumble easier to accept. When you’re done, just get her to bed, I’ll be in your room when you’re done. She’ll sleep the night away and be ok tomorrow, just a bit worse the wear for drink.”

A few more minutes later, Lisa walks back into her bedroom, to find Peter pacing, a cloud of inky black darkness hanging in the air, its red eyes gleaming down at him. She stops, hiding behind the door, “...

realise that this request of yours will not be looked on favourably?"

"I know, but it's not like the other options are all that great. Anyway, it's done now, and this will work. Now, you'd better go before she gets back. I don't think I could explain you to her right now, on top of everything else."

"As you wish." The smoke curls up into itself, spiralling down before it rockets out through a tiny gap between the window and frame. Lisa waits for a heartbeat, before she comes into the room.

"Who was that?"

"Who was what?"

"Don't play games with me, Peter, I'm really not in the mood. I heard you talking to someone but you're the only person here, so who were you talking to?"

"Someone I know who has a bit of influence with the Conclave. I was just trying to persuade him that this situation wouldn't happen again."

"You were making promises on my behalf?"

"Given that the alternative was for them to do to you what I did to Ola, but without bothering to buffer the effects or concern for any other damage that might do, I figured it would be ok. Look, Lisa, this is serious stuff. It's as much my fault as yours. I should have explained things, or put you back together, or at least locked the door, but I was in a rush when I left. So if we're going to play here, we're going to have to be a lot more careful, 'K?'"

"Ok, I'll be good and we can get the Magic Gestapo off our backs." Peter winces at that. "Now, what's with this only one person can know business? Who gets to choose?"

"Oh, that's easy. This way, only people who we can trust absolutely know about us. Usually they're the apprentices or partners of the magician involved. And there are still some things I can't tell you. Those secrets aren't revealed to anyone outside of the community. And the magician gets to choose."

"How do you know who you can trust?" Peter grins.

"Magic." Lisa glares at him, "Ok, we scan their surface thoughts while we do the first trick, see what they think about it."

"You can read my mind?"

"A bit, yeah." *Best not to mention that I can change it, too; she'll freak if she finds that out.* Lisa hears the last bit echoing around her mind. Her eyes narrow.

"So you know everything I'm thinking?"

"No, no. Invading privacy like that is a really serious thing. We don't do that sort of thing lightly. I can take a pretty good guess about what you're thinking, though. Right now you're thinking about whether you want to continue seeing me."

"Wrong. Peter, despite all this, I do still love you. But could you mention things like a magical police force who take secrecy really, really seriously before it becomes necessary next time?"

"I'll do my best."

"Peter, have you made me love you?"

“What???”

“You were just thinking how I’d freak if I found out you could change my mind. Have you?”

“How did you know...”

“I don’t know, I just heard you in my head. You’re the expert on this sort of crap. So, answer the question: Did you use your magic to make me fall in love with you?”

“No. Why would I? I love you for being you and messing about with people’s personalities like that is dangerous. I could have wiped out the bits of you I loved if I tried changing something as massive as whether you loved me.” *But I did make the magic feel better for you when you went into the sack at Christmas.*

“Heard that one, too, Peter.”

“Jesus, can’t a guy have any secrets around here? What I did was enhance the pleasure you got from being subjected to magic, but only for a little while. It wore off shortly after we had our light-sabre duel, and I couldn’t see the point of renewing it; you were enjoying the magic plenty without it.”

“Good. Now, shoo. It’s getting late and we both need to get up early for work tomorrow.” She kisses him and feels her lips tingle as he fades away underneath them.



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