

PETER AND LISA: CHAPTER 37
WHO'S THE BOSS?

“What do you mean ‘Carrie’s coming over’? I thought you wanted more practice time!”

“I do.”

“So why’s she coming over?”

“She’s got more experience than either of us at getting a show to look good...”

“She’s got more experience at doing the show topless, you mean. That makes anything look good to the people who go to those types of shows.”

“Which is still more experience than we have. And we need help with this.”

“But Carrie? Why can’t you ask Stuart and Sarah to give advice?”

“They’re kind of busy with Grace. And running E’s. And...”

“Ok, got it. But Carrie??”

“Lise, I...” his phone rings, “sorry.” He reaches into his pocket, “Hi, Carrie. Where are you?” a pause, “Where? How are you going to get here from there?” another, longer, pause, “Yes, I’m still here. You’ve done this deliberately, haven’t you?” he sighs, “Fine, fine. Lise, step back a bit, we’re about to have company.” He holds the phone out, reaching into the screen. He pulls, dragging Carrie out through the phone.

“Ooooooh, that feels so good. I’m still tingly.”

Lisa raises her eyebrow.

“You’re lucky I’ve got unlimited downloads on this thing.”

Carrie giggles.

“And if you pull that sort of stunt again, I might just leave you as an app for a bit.”

Carrie’s eyes go wide, although not quite as wide as her smile. “Sounds good to me. But if you do, could you send me over to Tracy as well? Having me in her pocket all day would be fun”

“You are so weird.”

“Yup. Besides, your boyfriend isn’t going to be too nasty. He’s not the type. So it’d be a day or two at most.”

“How do you know he’s not the type?”

“Well, he’s still with you, for one. And for another, he even brought my phone over with me. Someone that thoughtful isn’t going to be too nasty to li’l ole me.” she says in her best Penelope Pitstop, one hand demurely on her chest, eyes full of wide-eyed innocence.

“So, what did Dr Baker say?”

“That’s between us, I think.”

“Given why you went there? I don’t think it is.”

“Oh, I’m fine. You’re just fussing. Besides, you can’t make me tell you.”

“Uhm, actually, I can. Life debt, remember? Do you really want me to pull that on you?”

Carrie rolls her eyes, “Yes! What is the point of letting yourself get owned if you’re not going to be ‘forced’ to do things totally ‘against your will’?!”

“What?”

“What?!!” Lisa turns towards Peter, “What does she mean ‘owned’? You said that life debt whatever wasn’t you owning her!!”

“It’s not.”

“She seems to think it is!”

“She’ is still in the room, you know.”

“Shut up, Carrie!”

“No, **you shut up and listen, for once!** That’s better. You want to give the technical explanation before she explodes? Again.”

Peter looks over at Lisa, “Uhm, sure, I guess. Look, Lise, I don’t own Carrie. I can’t sell her, or do anything permanent to her. If I did own her, there’s no limits.”

“So, what can you do to her?”

“Uhm, well...”

“Pretty much anything short of that. So all the really wild and fun stuff his stuck-up...”

“Carrie, don't 'help', please. But, yeah, anything short of that. In theory, I could turn her into something for the term of the debt.”

“Which is?”

“Uhm, it's a life debt so a lifetime. 3 score years and ten.”

“70 years?!”

“Yeah, they haven't kept up with medical technology. By rights, it should be longer by now.”

“Carrie, remember what I said about not 'helping'?”

“Yeah?”

“Could you consider that an actual command for a bit?”

“Oh, sure. Let me know when I can start poking her again.”

“So, what else can you get my baby sister to do?”

“Uhm, look, this is all in theory, but, uhm, kind of, anything. She has to obey me so I can make her do pretty much anything. She's also effectively given consent to any magic I do to her.”

“I see. So you could, say, order her to have sex with you?”

Carrie opens her mouth to reply then closes it.

“Technically, yes. I could do that. Why I would want to is another matter.”

“Hey! Are you saying I'm not sexy enough for you?!”

“No, that's not what I'm saying.”

“Oh, I know that. But you're cute when you realise you've got both of us mad at you and you can't get out without pissing one of us off. See, definitely not helping, just like I was told.”

“Thanks.”

“You're welcome, boss.”

“And don't call me 'boss'.”

“So, what you're saying is...”

“What I'm saying is that, technically, there isn't much I can't do to your sister. Practically, I'm a lot more limited because I'm not a bastard for one, and because you'd kill me if I did anything even slightly like abusing this.”

Carrie sighs heavily, earning a scowl.

“You just have to trust me.”

“Ok, Magic Boy, ok, I trust you. It's just still a shock how casually you people can deal with this sort of crap.”

“Hey, sis, you're part of 'us people' now. Get used to it.”

“Just don't pull any crap on her.” Lisa continues, ignoring her sister.

“I won't. You know that.”

“Spoilsport.”

“Fine, Carrie, you can 'help' again.”

“Cool.”

“And you can answer the original question. What did Dr Baker say to you?”

“Word for word?”

“No, just the gist will be fine. Making you do things is going to be like ordering a djinni about, isn't it?”

“Now you're getting it. Reason three why you won't abuse things.”

“Maybe. I can handle dealing with djinn.”

“Ooooh, we'll see. Anyway, one thing Dr Baker said is he wants to see you two, pretty soon, to make sure you're not affected.”

“Not affected? Not affected by what? What did he say?”

“Ok, well, you know my collar? It's kind of got integrated into my aura, so as far as the world's concerned, I'm always wearing it. So I'm edible.”

“You're what?!”

“Oh, it's not that big a deal. It's not like I'm walking around with a big sign tattooed on my forehead saying 'eat me!'”

"And why does he want to see us if this is affecting your aura?"

"Well, he thinks it might have something to do with us helping Tabitha. I mean, I took off Tracy, but forgot about the collar. So when we freed her, it got caught in the backlash and, well, seems to have bonded to me. He just wants to make sure nothing happened to you, too."

"You're taking it remarkably well."

"Are you kidding? This is great! Now Tracy can just eat me whenever she likes. No needing to tell me so I put the collar on and spoil the surprise. Makes up for all the things I do to her, I think. Gives her a chance to be in charge. I kind of take control of things a lot. And now she can make me as helpless as I make her."

"'ahem' Yes, well, fine, I'll make the appointment for us."

"Awww, he's so cute when he blushes like that. So, I know that wasn't the main reason you wanted me over, so, what was it?"

"Well, we've got a show coming up..."

"Cool."

"...and it's outside E's..."

"Ah."

"...so it's..."

"...outside the 'fluence bubble? So, your normal act would be impossible."

"Pretty much."

"Hmmm. So, when is it?"

"Christmas."

"Christmas?! This Christmas?! Next month?! Are you crazy?! Even without my leadfoot sister as assistant that would be tough!"

"Hey!"

"Look, sis, I love you dearly, but you are not a natural performer. You're way too concerned about not looking stupid to really flow with it. Your boyfriend can get away with that. Magicians being stiff looks controlled; Assistants looks amateurish. And getting even a small show in shape in a month is tough, if you're good at what you're doing."

"Which is what we want your help with."

"Great. Don't ask for much, do you?"

"Who said we were asking? You did say you loved being forced to do things against your will."

"Well, yes, but I totally used quotes around that. This will seriously mess with my free time."

"And ours. What do you want in exchange? We could really use your help."

"How did you get suckered into this, anyway?"

"Peter can't say 'no' to our HR lady."

"Oh, really?"

"To be fair, no one can say 'no' to her. Even the boss does what he's told."

"Sounds like my kind of person."

"But doesn't actually help with the show."

"Yeah, but finding out Margaret has that effect on everyone is interesting. I thought it was just Tracy who couldn't say no."

"Ok, fine, so, what are we going to do?"

"No idea yet. We'll have to see what you've got in your Tardis. But I'm sure we can find something."

"Can't be too complicated. Lise needs to be trained in it as well."

Carrie looks across at her sister, "Hmmm. No explosion. She's mellowing." She grins into Lisa's scowl, and shrugs, "Besides, it'll probably be easier if I do most of the stuff. That way we don't have to worry about it."

"You're just looking for an excuse to have him play with you."

"Repeatedly." Carrie replies, smiling, "If you're worried I'll steal him away, you can always have him order me not to."

"And let you get your perverted kicks out of being ordered around? Not likely. Besides, I know I

can trust him.”

“And me?”

“Oh, I know I can’t trust you.”

“Good. Then let’s see what we can find in the magic room. And maybe have some fun while we’re in there. Please?”



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