

PETER AND LISA: CHAPTER 51

FORCING THINGS

Lisa sighs heavily, dropping the magazine and reaching for the bottle beside her. She picks it up, looking briefly at the empty glass. "Great. Just great. Can't even get shitfaced properly. How did I let this happen? Dumped for some oh-so-important 'community business' he can't tell me about. Can't talk to my best friend about it because I can't tell her shit. And can't talk to my other best friend because she doesn't understand what the problem is. And what is that problem exactly? Well, me, glad you asked. Apart from not having enough to drink and so getting stuck at the maudlin talkative stage rather than being nicely insensible, I'm not sure if the person I love is actually a sadist who'll end up torturing me for kicks. And worse than that is...I'm not sure I won't let him." She shivers, "Oh, wow, saying it out loud makes it so much worse! If I'm really that scared, I should do the sane thing and leave. Or kick him out and get O back in and just live down the months of jokes, maybe being tortured will be better. So, am I that scared? I mean, really? If I was scared, I wouldn't let him do...all those things to me. And aren't they torture, really? Only it doesn't feel like that. Because I trust him. But if I trust him, why am I worried he'll do something like that to me? So, do I trust him? Or not? And it's not just that, is it? It's....go on say her name, it's name? See, that's the problem, fine, it's Mimi. She was actually happy like that. And that makes no sense. How can someone be happy being a...a toy? I don't understand, but I seem to be the only one. Everyone else treats that as normal. So maybe I'm not cut out for this community. I'm not Carrie. She's already dived in headfirst with both feet and grown herself fucking gills. And someone has to protect her from...everything. And maybe protect me, too, if Sarah's right how close I've come to getting in real trouble, but that just makes it clear I don't belong here. And...fuck it, I am not drunk enough to be having this conversation with myself."

She pushes herself off the chair and stumbles into the kitchen, "So I'd better fix that. I just [wish I had some clue what I was doing here.](#)" She opens the fridge, just as a muffled thump and less muffled cursing comes from the lounge. "What is that? Peter? Is that you? Not good. [I wish I had my...](#)" she feels a black rod thump into her hand, "...huh? Oh, right, wishing. Thanks, ring." She cautiously steps towards the open doorway. "Is anyone in here?" she hears something moving, "I warn you, I'm armed." she grips the handle tighter. There's a thump of something heavy falling to the floor. The cursing stops.

"Oh, wonderful." the voice sounds vaguely familiar, coming from behind the sofa. A tiny winged figure flits out, smoothing down her dress, "Oh, of course, it's you. What do you want now?!"

"Me?! You're the one who crashed into my flat!"

"Not intentionally. I was just settling in for a nice Pride and Prejudice marathon, Colin Firth in that lovely wet shirt, mmmmm, I mean, about to enjoy the literary splendour of the adaptation, when suddenly I get yanked away to here and look what I find waiting for me...the most irresponsible, selfish, inconsiderate, rude, irresponsible..."

"You said irresponsible."

"Yes. And it was true both times!" she huffs, folding her arms over her chest, foot tapping on the empty air, her wings buzzing, "And you're surprised which makes it worse as I bet you wished me here without so much as a by your leave which only goes to prove my point."

"You had a point?" she lowers the lightsabre, "I thought you were just haranguing me."

"Don't you start, my girl. You're not so big I won't put you over my knee and give you a good spanking."

Lisa looks down at the tiny figure, "I...uh....I think I might be a bit big for you to do that."

The fairy smiles viciously back, "Yes, you would. Bloody giants, always so cocky in their clumsy giantness. Think just being bigger makes you so great and powerful. Well, you just listen here, if you think I'm going to stand here and..." she floats higher, rising to look Lisa directly in the eye, and stops, sniffing, "Is that alcohol? You're doing magic drunk?! And I thought Peter had stopped being so irresponsible as to let..."

"Let?"

"Fine, fine, you're a modern woman who doesn't need a man to let her be irresponsible with things you don't even halfway understand. I sympathise, a little. I remember in my youth how stuffy everyone seemed and how they were getting in the way of so much fun, but..."

"That's not the problem!"

"It isn't? How odd. What is the problem, then? As if you young people really have problems..."

"You have no idea what problems I have!"

"Oh. Actual problems? Relationship not going to plan? Something like that. Well," she flutters down to the sofa, dangling her legs over the edge, patting the cushion, "why don't you sit your gigantic arse down and tell your Auntie J...your fairy godmother all about it."

"Auntie what?"

"Nothing. This is what happens when you let uppity people get familiar, some of that familiarity bleeds back and you forget you're not one of them anymore."

"So how are you going to help with my problems?"

"Who said anything about helping? I just want to hear what you've futzed up now?" she looks up at Lisa's scowl,

"Kidding, kidding. Honestly, can't you take a joke? I have no idea but your ring clearly thinks I'm the best person to fulfil your wish so..."

"What do you mean 'the ring thinks'? It can't think, it's not alive. Is it?" she looks nervously at the band on her finger.

"So literal. Shorthand metaphor for your subconscious acting through the ring to get you what you're actually wishing for, not exactly what you say. You people don't like it when we give you the literal versions. Complaining about wording being twisted the whole time. Never hear the end of it. No wonder we lock you up in towers behind forests of thorns when you're asleep because you pricked your finger. Typical giants. So clumsy."

"What?"

"Nothing important, dear. So, what ninety-nine problems do you have?"

"It's...complicated."

"Oh, goodie, I just love complicated. What's at the root of it all? Lover's spat? Or are you still finding out how warped the magic community is?"

"The...probably a bit of both but, not a spat exactly."

"Ooooh, intriguing. What would you call it, exactly?"

"It's just...I don't know if..." she takes a deep breath, "ok, we were mugged and..."

"You were mugged?! Who's we?"

"Peter and me."

"Well, I can see how that would shake someone, even someone like..."

"Why does everyone think it was the mugging that shook me up?! It wasn't that! It's the fact I'm in love with a psycho!"

"I'm sorry, what?"

"I said..."

"I know what you *said*, dear, I'm asking what you *meant*. He hasn't hurt you, has he?"

"No, but..."

"Well, that's a relief at least. So, what *has* he done?"

"He was, he turned the mugger into graffiti and was going to leave him like that!"

"I see."

"And he was enjoying it! The, he was terrified! And Peter was enjoying it!"

"Uh-huh."

"And everyone seems to think he was right and I'm somehow irrational for begging him to stop!"

"Uh-huh. Could you maybe put that down before you hurt someone? Especially if that someone is me."

"What are you..." she looks down into the crimson glow bathing the room, a beam of light emerging from the lightsabre clenched in her hand, "shit!" she drops it like a hot iron, the beam flashing out instantly. "Fuckfuckfuckfuck!" her head drops, hands coming up to cover her face. A tiny hand pats at her arm.

"There's a girl. Let it out."

Lisa sniffs. "What is wrong with me?"

"Well, putting my amateur psychologist hat on, I'd imagine you're stressed about the mugging, and even more so finding out things you didn't understand about us."

"What?"

"You're a civilised girl, sorry, woman, and, well, we're not."

“That doesn’t make...”

“I mean, that we have a long and storied history with assorted authority figures and none of it ends well for our side of it. Usually, it’s torches and pitchforks and running and shouting and screaming and blood and pain and fire. So, when there’s a problem, we deal with it ourselves. Whereas, you haven’t had that history, being a normal person up until recently, so you’re more inclined to think like a normal person and let the police deal with things like that.”

“That...”

“Oh, don’t get me wrong. We like civilisation, it has so many advantages, but we don’t exactly trust it to keep us safe. And getting it involved always has questions that are hard to answer, so, there’s a much more DIY approach to matters of justice.”

“That doesn’t explain him enjoying it.”

“No, no, it doesn’t. It’s just laying the groundwork to explain why he reacted in ways that you would never have conceived of. For us, it wasn’t out of line for self-defence. The punishment for a first serious offence should preclude a second offence.” She looks up, waiting for the interruption, “As for him enjoying it, well, possibly he did. Peter’s very like his father now, not like when he was younger, but everything’s fine for a good long time and then...they’re pushed one step too far and things get nasty,”

“What do you mean?”

“Oh, I doubt you have anything to worry about personally. No matter how much you push him, he wouldn’t hurt you. For one, you can probably hurt him back.”

“No, I meant about Peter’s, I don’t know what I meant.”

“Ok. Peter’s father is like his son in a lot of ways. Controlled. Calm. Reasonable. All sound familiar? And just like Peter, there’s an...edge to him, too. A bit of mocking humour. A bit of control given and taken. Still familiar? Good. And very rarely, someone comes along and threatens what’s important to him. And at that point, the leash slips, that ‘bit of an edge’ gets out and active. I’m surprised you don’t know what I mean, honestly.”

“Why would I...”

“Samhain. You got in trouble doing what exactly?”

“Fighting with that...”

“No, no, no, that’s the superficial understanding. I expect better. What were you doing?”

“I don’t...”

“Fine. Be stupid. You were trying, badly, granted, but trying, to protect your sister. Because that’s what you do. You didn’t know, and wouldn’t have cared if you did know, what you were risking.”

“I...that’s...”

“Ok. Knowing what you know now, would you do it again?”

“I...well, I wouldn’t make that bet again.”

“That’s good, dear. At least you’re learning something. But the rest...? The fighting, and then risking everyone’s life to break the spell?”

“I...yes.”

“Exactly. And if Mark or someone else actually hurt your sister, or, god forbid, killed her, you’d react...badly.”

“I, I...I wouldn’t enjoy it!”

“Let’s hope we don’t have to find out, dear. But I rather think you would. You’re definitely the sort to go full on Old Testament on people who wrong you badly enough.”

“I wouldn’t...”

“Oh, of course, you would, dear. You’ve got plenty of fire to crush your enemies, see them driven before you and hear the lamentations of their women.”

“I...”

“Or are we forgetting turning your boss’s head into a bowling ball, hmmmmmm?”

“That was...”

“Of course it was, dear. Totally different. And I’m sure you didn’t enjoy it at all.”

“That was different!”

“Was it, dear?”

“She wasn’t going to be left like that!”

“Well, no, but...aha! Lightbulb moment.” a tiny little lightbulb appears above her head, “Oh, very funny, ha, ha, ha. I’ll get you for this.” she waves her hands through it, the bulb dissipating into softly glowing mist before fading, “As I was saying, it’s not that Peter enjoyed it that really bothers you...”

"You're telling me what I think now, too?"

"Merely commenting, dear. Don't get all hot and bothered about it. Anyway, it's not that he was enjoying it that bothered you, at least not the most. You have a...thing about permanent changes."

"Of course I have a 'thing' about that! Who wouldn't have a 'thing' about that?! Why does everyone treat it as normal to just change people and then treat them like they're things?!!"

"Well, dear, how is it really that different to a long prison sentence?"

"That's not the same! She's treated like a toy and..."

"She? I thought you said the mugger was a he?" she looks up, "Or are we talking about something else now?"

"I...she..."

"Perhaps you'd like to start at the beginning of this one, dear. Who is 'she'?"

"I..."

"No pressure, but you're clearly far more willing to spoil your tough as nails image with little ol' me rather than Peter."

"You wouldn't understand. You're part of this."

"Oh, you would not believe what I understand, dear. Try me."

"Fine." she lifts her bottle up, "Ok, there was this girl, Mimi, at the club, and she was...I don't know? Really reduced. Tits, hips and a face. You could fit her into a carrier bag!"

"Mmmhmmm. About so big? Boobs where her legs should be and face on the waist?" she asks, holding her hands out to indicate the shape. Lisa nods, "Sounds like a Minimal Lover. Fairly crude design, but popular among those who like being really helpless. I think SAT do a lovely line in undergarments for it. Do go on."

"It's got a name? Of course it's got a name. So, anyway, Mimi was this...minimal lover, stuck on a pole and..."

"At the club? My, my, Stuart is letting his standards slip into interesting places."

"What? No, not that club, the one run by that creep, what's his name, Osbourne."

"Osbourne? Steven Osbourne?"

"That's the one."

"Oh, he's back, is he? Well, well, well."

"You know him?"

"Oh, yes, dear, more's the pity. Thoroughly unpleasant, self-centred, oily little bastard, but with enough swagger that he's 'cool' to impressionable teenagers like the boys. I'm very surprised he's dared to show his face again after what happened."

"What..."

"We're not talking about him, though, dear. [Please do continue.](#)"

"Right. Anyway, she was displayed on the pole and they started an auction for her!"

"Mmmhmmm."

"And, of course, you don't see the problem with that!"

"Well, I assume she was willing? Both for the form and the sale?"

"That's not the point!"

"Actually, dear, that is very much the point. If she knows what she's doing and is fine with what's happening to her, whose business is it but hers and whoever buys her?"

"You can't sell people!"

"Oh, of course not, that would be terrible, but people doesn't mean humans. Some people are really things and some things are really people."

"What?"

"Well, I'm definitely a person, but I'm not human. And golems are people, sometimes, mostly not, granted, but if they're self-aware, they're people. Adam Frankenstein was definitely a people. Utter bastard, of course, but not a thing. And as for the talking animals... Definitely people. Although the brooms are a tricky proposition. Are they self-aware of just animated robots? Anyway, the point is, people has broader connotations in our community. It's a state of mind, rather than a state of right."

"Wait, wait, wait!"

"Yes, dear?"

"What does that have to do with..."

"I'm coming to that, dear. Let's see, Mimi, that was the name, yes, is probably on the extreme end of submissiveness. Some people get into the role of being subhuman and take things to the logical conclusion, voluntarily submitting their

existence as a person.”

“That’s...”

She holds up a tiny warning finger, “Don’t interrupt, dear, it’s a sign of bad breeding. Now, even with that, which, remember, is the extreme end of things, you can change your mind. It’s not as easy as all that, admittedly, but it’s possible.”

“She was going to be sold!!”

“Yes, dear, you said. And if she objected, she could have said so and that would have put things on hold at least. I take it she didn’t do that?”

“No. But...”

“But you think the whole shebang is wrong in principle.”

“Of course it’s wrong!”

“Why? I mean, it’s something all sides are agreeing to. And you know our community has a thing about self-determination.”

“It’s wrong because...you can’t just buy and sell people! It’s slavery! It’s obviously wrong!”

“Oh, slavery, yes, dear, slavery is quite wrong. Taking people and treating them as things without their consent is appalling. And chattel slavery, why, that is a monstrous thing, but what you’ve described? That’s just a form of dom/sub relationship and really no more of anyone else’s business than some of the wilder polycules or swinging groups.”

“But...”

“No, dear, no buts. If you’re not into that, don’t get into it, fine, but if other people are, it’s none of your beeswax, even if they’re being public about it. No need to be as blinkered as the mundies, right?”

“But...”

“I said no buts.”

“What about me?”

“What about you, dear?”

“The bet! Everyone warned me how bad it was! How could that be...”

“You know, dear, that’s a very good point. And not one I honestly expected you to get to so quickly or I’d have an answer ready.”

“So?”

“Well, one, let’s be honest dear, even five minutes as someone’s slave would be a bit much for you to deal with. What with your views on the practice and all.”

“But...”

“Two,” she continues holding up a second finger and quite ignoring Lisa, “that bet would make things...trickier. Not impossible, but it would take some time and you’d probably be serving minimum terms. You did agree of your own free will, after all. It wouldn’t be fair to Mark to just cancel the bet just because you lost.”

“I did not...”

“Yes, you did, dear. I know you’ve been over this, but agreement through ignorance is different to agreement under duress. The fact you didn’t know what you were agreeing to does not mean you did not agree to it. It might make you somewhat reckless, but it doesn’t mean it wasn’t an agreement. The only ‘agreement under duress’ we really honour is if the Keeper or similar decides punishment is necessary for a particularly egregious act and if Osbourne didn’t get that for what he did, well, you’d have to be a right proper arsehole to get hit by anything worse than a slap on the wrist. Maybe literal, although then I imagine young Sarah would enjoy that far more than you would.”

“I...”

“Three, well, honestly, there isn’t really a three. Two covers things quite nicely I feel. But, if you insist, three is just because something is possible, doesn’t mean it’s easy or quick. Even this Mimi can’t just snap her fingers and get personhood again and she’s in this voluntarily. Lot of work for Slate, Stoker and Howe, if it’s challenged. I mean, it’s not something that’s happened that I can remember, so they’d be coining it in Jarndyce and Jarndyce style.”

“Who?”

“Literary reference, dear. Can’t imagine why I thought someone educated in modern schools like you’d be familiar with the classics.”

“So I should just what?”

She shrugs, “That’s really up to you, dear. But, if you want things to change, you really are going about it in just about the worst way possible.”

“What?”

“You come into a community that you don’t understand, you don’t take any time to understand its unique perspectives

and then you condemn it for not conforming to your way of thinking. And for some reason you're shocked when we don't fall down at your feet as our anointed saviour come to lead us."

"It's...I don't..."

"Oh, please, dear. I know introspection isn't popular these days, not that it ever was, but really? How have you done anything but? At least learn a bit before flying off the handle. No one's asking you to take part in our little community's more outré kinks..."

"Except Sarah."

An eyebrow raises, "...except for her royal kinkiness, apparently, but you're being just a tad judgemental because we don't share your idea of how people should behave. And that tends to go over poorly. At the very least, keep your trap shut rather than proving Twain right about fool's opening their mouths."

"Hey!"

"You see? Undiplomatic language and being judgemental just gets people's backs up. I mean, I somewhat like you and even I'm getting annoyed with you now."

"I...fine. I'll try."

"Oh, dear, that's such a more mature response than I expected. Maybe there is hope for you after all. And now that my task is done, I take my leave. Do try not to get into too much trouble, dear." she flits into the air.

"Too much'?"

"Best to keep my expectations low, dear. We are talking about you, after all."

"Bye then!" she lifts up the bottle, "Great. I'm going to have to apologise to Sarah now, aren't I? Fine, fine, and Carrie. Wonderful."

Some time and at least one bottle later, "Come on, all you have to do is just pick it up, press dial and apologise for being a total bitch. You'd think you'd have enough practice at that by now, but apparently not." she stares down at the phone, which, rather unhelpfully, does not respond, "And this is the easy one." There's a tentative knock on the door, "And me without my slave. I'm coming, I'm coming." As she levers herself to her feet there's another, more insistent set of knocks, "Jeez, give a girl a chance, will you?" the knocking repeats. "This better be important." she opens the door.

"Hey, sis. Is Peter in?" she looks at the platinum-blonde-to-the-roots before her, crystal blue eyes gleaming bright. Tracy stands in Carrie's shadow, figuratively and literally, making herself as unnoticed as possible.

"He's not. Come in anyway."

"Was that actual hospitality? Are you feeling alright?"

"Maybe. And maybe. What did you want? And has it got anything to do with the new dye-job?" Carrie smiles, "Isn't it cool? Watch." she runs her hands back through her hair and shakes black curls out. "Cate Blanchette eat your heart out, It can even get weird."

"Surely not."

Carrie covers her eyes and opens them with crimson irises set in golden whites. Another run through and her hair shimmers like it's made of molten iron. "Perfect for next Halloween, right?" another run and her hair is back to the vibrant white-blonde.

"What?"

"Mark's been making me so many different girls it seems to have rubbed off."

"What?"

Carrie smiles. Her skin and eyes darken, her hair exploding into a frizzy mass of black curls, "Say what again, motherfucker. I dare you! I double dare you!" she says in her best Samuel L Jackson, pointing a finger gun at her sister.

"What?"

Tracy shrugs apologetically, "She's been like this since it first happened. I have no idea who I'm going to wake up to now."

Carrie rolls her eyes, "Ok, fine, you pair of grumps." she shakes her head, skin lightening, hair returning to its natural auburn. "Better?"

"I assume this is what you want to talk to Peter about?"

"No. This is fine. It's just a fun twist on things. No problem."

“So?”

“You explain.”

“Me?” Tracy squeaks.

“Sure. She's not your boss any more, no need to be intimidated.”

“Uhm...” she looks somewhat nervously.

“I won't bite.”

“You'd better not, sis. She's my snack. Get your own.”

Tracy colours, “Ok, so, uhm ,we were experimenting...”

“For science!”

“...and we, uhm, we found some...well, you know we found that they could be purple? And that got me thinking about if there could be other colours and so we were experimenting...”

“For science!”

“...and we found that it could be other colours and...”

“And we got a full rainbow pridesabre! And she wanted to let Peter know. Because she's worried it means its broken or something. Even though last time he couldn't find anything wrong with it.”

“That doesn't mean there's nothing wrong!”

“It's fine. So it has some hidden features, that's just cooler. Even if she won't even try to make it a rainbow.”

“Because that would include red and if that works it would hurt you! We've had this...”

“So, yeah, she wants to see Peter to make sure it's safe after playing mad scientist on me with it.”

“We tried it on the sofa first!”

“Sure we did. At first. So, can you tell Peter we're looking for him?”

“Yeah, sure, listen, I...”

“Actually, TS1, we should probably show her what happens. So she can give Peter proper information.”

Carrie looks towards Lisa with a suppressed smile she recognises and a wink, “Do I have to? I hate the pink one!”

“Yes, yes, you do.”

“Yes, Mistress.” she replies semi-contritely, looking down at the floor and mouthing 'motivation' to Lisa.

“Good.” she turns to Lisa, “Can we get into his warehouse without him? I feel a bit weird doing this stuff in your living room.”

“I'm not sure. It won't be messy, will it?”

“Well, apart from the blood and ...”

“No. It won't be messy No matter what TS1 says.”

“TS1?”

She colours deeper, looking away.

“Teat Subject 1. My Mistress' primary test subject for her perverted mad science experiments.”

Tracy practically glows red, pointign sharply into the middle of the room, “Oh, just get over there.”

“Yes, Mistress.” she skips into the middle of the room. “This should be enough space.” She starts twirling around, arms out to make sure. “Do I need to take my clothes off in case they get...”

“No!”

“No!”

“Spoilsports.”

“Yes!”

“Especially you, sis.”

“Ahem. First a little recap. Red for real.” the blade bathes the room in harsh crimson light.

“Uhm, you're not planning on using that one, right?”

“Don't worry. I wouldn't deliberately damage my favourite test subject.” she strokes a hand possessively along Carrie's cheek. “Blue slices.” the blade shimmers easily and flashes through Carrie's shoulder, her arm falling to the floor with a yelp. “Green does the same and makes things vanish.” the other arm disappears as the blade slices through it.

"Most disarming, Mistress."

"Be grateful I didn't take your ungrateful head with it."

"Yes, Mistress."

"White makes you glow." the blade emerges from Carrie's chest, "and purple shouldn't exist but makes you ghostly." Carrie waves her transparent hand as Tracy waves a hand through her face.

"That's where we are. So, new colours and effects. Grey..."

"Is borrrrring!"

"...restores the subject to what passes for normal, suppressing all the magical effects." A pale grey beam of light swipes through Carrie's waist, her arms popping back into existence as she turns solid.

"Black seems to be the opposite of white and makes the subject harder to see." The black light sweeps across, leaving deeper shadows and patches of nothing in its wake. "Which would be useful if we were going to go burgling, I suppose."

"Not on a school night, Mistress."

"Pink is..." the blade turns a brilliant neon pink.

"Not pink! I hate pink!"

"Shush." she pushes the blade into Carrie's side. Her body bulks up, her waist and hips thinning, her hair shortening, stubble appearing across her firming jawline, her chest melting downwards as her shoulders get broader, stretching the top across them.

"I hate this." Carrie whines in a deep baritone.

"Oh, be quiet, Karl. So pink seems to swap genders. Testing that one on the couch was pointless."

"Mistress, please..."

"Ok, I'll be nice." The blade swaps to grey and Carl shrinks back into Carrie.

"Thank you, Mistress. It's not fair, pink should at least turn you extra girly."

"You have been busy."

"You haven't seen the good ones, yet. Mistress is building tension."

"The yellow is a bit odd." she swings it through Carrie's waist, dragging her body sideways like she was in a cartoon, stretching her waist out. "We haven't found out what happens if you drag things so far they snap yet" she pulls the lightsabre out and Carrie's waist twangs back to its original shape,

"It also works if you push." She presses it against Carrie's back and a bulge appears in her stomach.

And then vanishes. "And if you concentrate hard..." the golden blade flashes through Carrie's arm.

Nothing seems to happen. Until Tracy grabs her hand and pulls, the arm stretching out like rubber.

"It also makes it rubbery," she shakes the hand, "stretchy, and you can do fun bondage things with it." as she pulls on the arm, tying it in a very loose knot.

"That looks...painful if the magic wears off."

"Oh, it just plops back to normal, sis. Nothing to worry about. No bloody bone shards sticking through or anything like that."

"Good. I didn't need that image in my head, but...good."

A grey light slashes through the arm and Carrie's hand whips around as it untangles itself. "Thank you, Mistress. May I have another?" The blade's colour deepens to orange. "Ooooooh."

"Orange shrinks the target." she passes the blade through Carrie who drops a noticeable few inches.

"Normally it applies to the whole body, but if you concentrate you can isolate things." The blade passes through Carrie's neck, her head dwindling.

"Very funny, Mistress." she squeaks, "I'll remember this when it's my turn."

"Oh, hush, TS1. You can also make things bigger, but that requires even more concentration."

Another swing and Carrie's sporting an oversized left arm.

"Mistress likes using that on naughty places." The blade flashes back to grey and Carrie pats herself down.

"That's a lot of colours."

"One more. Brown..." the blade turns a dark chocolate glow, "...transmutes the target. It seems to be random, but stays solid. You can influence it, but it takes a lot. We haven't tried liquids yet."

"Too messy!"

"Quite. The blade plunges into her chest and Carrie's metal body gleams in silence. Tracy flicks it with a metallic ping. "Usually they last up to half-an-hour. On Carrie, they seem to fade off after a

couple of hours. Here concludes the presentation. Can you let Peter know, please? Despite what she thinks, I'm not sure it's safe. Especially when it takes so long to revert her back without the grey."

"Ok. I'll tell him." she looks over at the metal statue, "You're not planning on leaving her there for two hours are you?"

"Oh, no. I'll take her home and get her out of your hands."

"How?"

The blade shines orange and stabs into Carrie's chest, the metal body dwindling down as Tracy holds it there, stopping when Carrie's small enough to be used as a Monopoly piece. "There. Much easier to transport like this. Uhm, if that's ok? I can use the grey to..."

"It's ok. I've been told I need to be minding my own business more. Anyway, she'll probably enjoy it. And I trust you with her a lot more than I'd trust her with you."

"Oh, right. Uhm, good? Thanks?" She picks Carrie up, slipping her into her purse with the lightsabre. "Uhm, you will tell Peter?"

"I'll tell him."

"Oh, thank you. Uhm, I guess I should go, so she doesn't, uhm, turn back before we get home."

More time, and at least another bottle, later, once Peter's returned from his super-secret business and she's trying to explain what happened, "I'm sorry, what?"

"I said, Carrie came around and..."

"No, I got that bit. But you said you were going to apologise. What have you done with the real Lisow!" he rubs his arm as Lisa holds her fist up.

"Is that 'real Lisa' enough, Magic Boy?"

"Ok, ok, you've convinced me you're not a Skrull."

"So?"

He sighs, "So. I don't understand how it can do that. It's just a gadget. It works a certain way and that's it. It certainly shouldn't be able to transmute things! I can have a look, but..."

"But you don't think you'll find anything."

"I didn't last time."

"Right. But it's not going to, I don't know, explode on her?"

"It shouldn't?"

"Very reassuring. Also, you and I, we need to talk."

"We aren't talking now?"

"No. Not talk, talk talk. As in serious stuff talk."

"Lise, you know..."

"Not about your secrets, just...us."

"Us?"

"Like I said, we need to talk. Tomorrow."

"Why tomorrow?"

"Because I'm tired and a little drunk and really not up for serious. In fact, I'm going to bed. Feel free to join me."

Elsewhere, "Well, that was an interesting conversation. I mean, I was hoping for more heart to heart, but I can wait."

"They are trouble."

"Who are, dear?"

"Her whole family."

"Oh really?"

"Don't pretend you can't see it. She is arrogant, disruptive and has no respect for us. Her sister is, arguably, worse with her utter recklessness."

"Oh, yes, dear, because we're such a responsible and well-behaved bunch. I seem to recall similar things being said of another disrespectful, reckless inductee not all that long ago."

"You never..."

"Nope. Never ever ever." she flits up to the darkness, planting a loud kiss on its cheek, leaving a pair of

gleaming ruby lip prints behind as she flies way. “And maybe having to display that hickey all day will persuade you not to lightbulb me again.”

“**Yes, Auntie J.**”

“I heard that!”