

PETER AND LISA: CHAPTER 52

THE TALK

As the song goes, Lisa tumbles out of bed and stumbles to the kitchen, drawn by the sizzle and smell of grilling bacon rather than a cup of ambition, but it is the weekend. "Morning."

She mumbles something in response.

"Ah, not human yet."

She mumbles something else that may or may not have been a generally anatomically impossible suggestion. A mug of dark coffee drifts across the kitchen towards her. The mumbles may or may not change tone into something resembling a thank you. Peter slaps the bacon onto the bread, sucking his fingers clean of grease, and silence descends as Lisa sips her way towards active consciousness.

A few minutes later, as the dishes float towards the sink, "Ready to human yet?"

Lisa swallows the last piece of bacon sandwich. "More or less, I guess."

"So, last night you said we needed to talk..."

"Hey, I can just about manage human but adulting is asking a bit much."

"More coffee?"

"More coffee."

More coffee later, "So..."

Lisa sighs, "Ok, ok, you big bully."

"So?"

"So, ok, I need to get this out and no interrupting."

"Ok."

"I mean it. And this isn't an attack or anything, 'cause I do love you."

"Ooooookayyyyyy. This is not sounding good..."

"Right, no interrupting, remember?" he nods, "Right, so this is, well, it came to a head with that mugging. And if you say anything about that shaking me up, like literally everyone else has done, I will get actual mad. So, after that, I saw, well, a different side of you. And I didn't like it. You were cruel. Harsh. Brutal. And that scared me, you scared me!"

"I what?!"

"You scared me." she repeats, "I didn't think you'd be like that. And it made me realise..." she pauses, "...just what you could do to me."

"I don't..."

"Shhhhh. I mean, I knew it, in my head, but I didn't get what what you can do meant. And then you did...that! And I saw what you can really do when you're not holding everything in. And that shit is fucking scary! I didn't feel that scared at Samhein. I don't think I got that that was really real, either. God, I'm lucky to still be alive! Our little community is like a minefield you have to dance across on a pogostick juggling chainsaws, isn't it? Every single second, you could get caught and blam!" she throws her hands up, "And maybe I took this a little too much to heart because of the rest of the evening rubbing my nose in...in things, and with Mimi." she sighs heavily, "This is going to be tough. I've been thinking, a lot, after that about this place, about us, about me, and how I don't fit. I can't tolerate people as things. I can't deal with binding agreements made by trickery. I can't deal with absolutely everybody being a complete and open pervert. So..."

Peter looks intently at her. "So. This sounds a lot like you're breaking up with me and trying to say 'it's not you it's me'."

"Yeah, it does, doesn't it? What happens if I do?"

"What do you mean 'what happens'?"

"Don't you have to..." she waves vaguely, "...Men in Black me if I leave?"

"Men in...? Oh, no, no, you're embedded now. Even if you leave the crazy world we have, you're still one of us."

"Still one of us?"

"You can do your own magic. So you're one of us rather than a mundane, regardless of whether you take an active part in the community."

"Does that mean I have to be careful?"

"Well..."

"So that's a yes. You'd have said no if it wasn't true."

"Fine, yes, you still have to be careful about not giving away our secrets. Maybe not as careful about agreements as with us, but always better to be on the safe side."

"Fine. So, if you don't have to memory me, why did..." she pauses.

"It's ok. You can say it. Why did I do that to Vicky?"

"Yeah."

"Because she isn't you. And I'm not the me I used to be. I never even tried to teach her how to do things. If you'd asked me why at the time I probably couldn't have answered you without sounding like a sexist prick. Which I probably was. Didn't think it was the sort of stuff my girlfriend would need to know."

"Yeah, that does sound like you were a sexist prick."

"Thanks for the support. Anyway, that meant Vicky was a bystander. When she left me, she left the community and that meant..."

"...that your secrets had to be protected."

"Uh-huh. And it went...wrong. And you know the rest."

"Yeah, I know the rest."

"So...we're breaking up?"

"I don't want to."

"But?"

"But," she sighs, "this isn't me. Being so careful. Walking on eggshells. Not speaking out. So, yeah."

"Yeah."

"Yeah. This is going to be hard."

"Yeah."

"I do love you."

"I love you, too."

"Good. Because I'm going to need your help to change things around here."

"I...wait, what?!"

"Well, I can't stay with things as they are with me as I am. So, either I have to change or everything else does. And, really, which do you think is more likely?"

"I..."

"Don't worry, I'm not going to be stupid about it. Lisa in a china shop isn't working. And maybe I need to change as well. A bit. In some places. Maybe."

"You...I thought you were serious! I thought you were leaving!"

"Did you? Well, if you think I've been bad," she flutters her eyelashes at him, "you probably need to punish me. If you can."

Some time later, Lisa looks up from the bed, her hands bound together by some comfortable but tight cuffs looped through the head of the bed, her ankles held by a pair of stiff-locked cuffs. "Well, this is...pretty much exactly where I thought you'd start. Me, all tied up and naked, vulnerable and so totally helpless for your cruel torments."

"I thought that was the point. Besides, you're never helpless, Lise. Not unless you want to be."

"So, what torment do you have planned for me?"

"It's a..."

"...surprise? You telling me would be much more of a surprise."

"Tough. Not knowing is part of your punishment."

"Heartless fiend!" her feigned bravado gives way to a shriek and squirm as Peter grabs hold of her

feet.

"Found a weakness, have I?"

"No, no, definitely not."

"So if I do this..." his finger idly traces along her sole, her toes scrunching up, her body jerking away.

"No, don't, I, don't!"

He stops, "Something to bear in mind for the future."

"You do and you're..." she stops as he turns her feet 180 degrees around, introducing a twist all the way along her body up to her cuffed wrists, "Oh!" She looks down her slightly twisted body, "Well, I admit that wasn't what I expected."

"What did you expect?"

"I don't know! But this wasn't it. I assume I'm going to get nicely braided?"

"Something like that."

"Ooooh, mysterious. Get on with it, then."

Another twist returns her feet to their normal position, albeit on legs that are beginning to cross unnaturally.

"I get the feeling this is going to get pretty tight."

Peter nods, giving her another 180 degree twist.

"And that I won't be able to talk for long."

Peter shakes his head, twisting her again.

"So, how long are we talking?"

Another half twist, "Restored before tonight."

"It's only the morning!"

Another twist, the curving running up her body, "And you're being punished."

Lisa rolls her eyes, while she still can, "Lunchtime."

"Before dinner." Another twist.

"Fine. As long as that means early evening."

"Deal." another twist.

"Today!"

"Curses, foiled again." another twist and Lisa's fingers give him a V as her arms start to wrap around her face. "Bye bye." another twist and Lisa's reply is muffled as her face starts to twist around.

A few twists later and in Lisa's place is a thick braid of pink running up from a pair of gently squirming feet at one end, to a pair of wriggling hands, capped by streaks of russet hair. A shudder ripples along it's length. "Not a bad start."

He gives it a few more twists, the braid tightening, getting thinner until it's gone from the width of his head to about the width of one arm, muffled moans emerging from it. A few twists more and its reduced to the width of his finger. Peter clips the cuffs to the foot of the bed to keep the tension in place and runs his finger along the braid, feeling the warm skin jumping under his fingers.

Lisa feels a gentle pressure, her body giving under it, tracing along the edges of her braided body. It feels a bit like the massage, firm, warm, merging her body together, only a lot less confusing as to what goes where. At each point where her body wraps around itself, she feels the skin merging together, leaving her skin smooth as if this column of flesh is what she should be. And it's strangely relaxing. She sinks into it as Peter's hands smooth her out all the way along the length, the tight braid becoming a single pink (with some russet) strip.

Peter takes her hands, kneading them slightly until they bonelessly slip through the cuffs, merging seamlessly with the rest of her body. And then her feet, the ribbon squirming as they vanish into it. Peter picks up the long ribbon and starts to loop it around and through itself until Lisa is once again rubbing up against places that really shouldn't be connected, a spaghetti Gordian knot of skin about the size of his head. Peter takes the ends, rubbing them together until the strip of his girlfriend is a closed loop.

Later in the day, “If you want this to count as tying the knot, I’ll need you to put a ring on it.”

Peter pats his pockets. “Sorry. Looks like I haven’t got one at the moment.”

“Typical. And this doesn’t count as restoration, you know.” Lisa huffs, blinking from eyes that have grown from different loops of her knotted body, her mouth on a third strand lower down.

“I know. And you’ll be properly restored, as we agreed.”

“Just not now because you get your kicks screwing with me.”

“Oh, sure, blame me.”

“I do.”

“I can live with that.”

“For now.”

“So, ignoring that obviously very serious threat, what do you plan to do to ‘fix’ us?”

“I heard those quotes, Magic Boy. And, well, I haven’t actually got that far yet...”