

HOOD
by Paul Watson

"Hi. Yes, you. The one reading this." she waves, "Yes, this is a fourth-wall breaking hilariously self-indulgent set up. Live with it.

*"So I'm...actually, you don't care what my name is, do you? I'm the Assistant. There, that's got your attention. Yes, **that** kind of assistant. And the gentleman in the suit hogging the spotlight is the Magician, and he's definitely a man and also definitely not gentle. He's got a real name, too, but you're probably just as uninterested in that.*

"So to help you visualise as the writer of this can't draw for shit, I've got shoulder length blonde curls and big, innocent baby blue eyes. As you'd imagine, I'm tall and slim, not as tall as the Magician but nearly six foot, and pretty, if I do say so myself. And I do, because someone has to. The magician does not know how to compliment a lady. And because it's what you're really interested in, I'm a D-cup. And my outfit is pure dream assistant, why not? Thigh-high stockings with garter belts, a dark blue thong you can use as cheese-wire and matching triangle bikini where the straps have used twice as much material as the triangles. So perfect for distracting eye-candy like me. And as the music's starting, I should be on stage."

She sashays onto the stage, a second spotlight picking her out, glittering over her besequined costume, giving a twirl to show everyone almost everything as she walks to the wooden chair picked out by the spotlight. The magician kisses her hand extravagantly. She dimples in response, smiling coquettishly as she sits, crossing her legs and putting her arms onto the rests.

"Isn't she a good girl? Already getting into position for us."

"Because I'm a professional, Marvin! Oh, ha ha, 'professional what'? So original."

"But let's make sure she stays where she belongs."

"I know, I know. Positively antedeluvian attitudes to women being exhibited. Don't worry, it's probably all an act. This is a magic show, after all. You can't believe everything you see."

White ropes coil in serpentine fashion around the chair, strapping her arms to the rests and her legs to the chair legs, forcing them apart. The ropes go under and over her chest, framing her décolletage nicely and looping once around her neck before tightening as it ties itself off behind the chair.

"Oh, look, a pretty girl in bondage, all helpless and exposed. That's more like it, isn't it? That's what you all want to see."

The magician traces his finger up her leg and down along her arm. Her breathing quickens a little as he produces a black ball gag from his pocket. Her eyes widen as it approaches, shaking her head. The magician smiles, holding her jaw open as he squeezes the rubber into her mouth.

"Mmmmmf!" she struggles as he pulls the leather band tight under her hair, the buckle folding into place.

"There. Little girls should be seen and not heard, right?"

"Mmmmmmm. Oh, grow up. Of course I enjoy this. You think I'd let him do it just for the pennies he pays me?"

He produces a shapeless bundle of black next, pressing it over her face. Her chest rises and falls as it conforms to her cheekbones, almost as tight as the rest of her outfit.

"And I know that's where you're paying attention, you pervs. He could be hiding anything in my hair and you'd never know. He isn't. Or maybe he is? Like I said, you'd never know while you're ogling my tits."

The magician moves around behind her, hair spilling from the gap. He starts to pull on the laces, closing the gap. Her hands and feet go wild and he stops.

"No, you're quite right. This bouffant construction will never fit under there."

There's a questioning, hopeful muffled response.

"Of course I'm not going to take the hood off."

A more urgent response.

"No, I'm not going to cut your hair either, Rapunzel."

"He likes that line. He's never even threatened to cut my hair. I mean, that's obvious because he's still breathing, right? Of course that doesn't mean I get off scot free."

The magician wraps some of the hair around his grip. He gives an experimental tug that sets off another wild waving of hands and feet and an even more wild protest into the gag. "Yes, that sounds like I've got a good grip." he yanks his hand back. There's a harsh sound of tearing cloth over a muffled scream. He steps back and back and back, pulling more and more golden hair out until it finally snaps, leaving him coiling it around his shoulder like a mountaineer's rope.

*"Yes, I'm overacting. Duh, It doesn't hurt **that** much, but I wouldn't say it's a nice feeling to have your hair pulled out by the roots, which are natural blonde and not dyed, thank you very much. How very dare you."*

The magician pulls on the laces again, firmly securing the hood in place.

*"Yes, it really is as tight as it looks. No, it's not comfortable, especially not with the extra pressure on the gag. No, I can't see, or hear. And when it's as tightly done up as it is, and he **really** likes it tight, I can't make more than a very muffled moan. Isn't that just too bad?"*

The magician smiles to the audience. "It's always better when she can't see what's coming." He produces a mallet, and, more ominously, a set of nails over eight inches long.

"Yeah, they're just as real and solid and nasty as they look. I might not be able to see or hear right now, but we have rehearsed this, you know, so I know exactly what to expect."

The magician places the point of a nail against the temple of the mask. The crowd hushes. The mallet hits the nail with a metallic ping. The assistant shudders, hands splaying. The magician gives it another tap and another. Those with sharp eyes can see that the nail is pushing into the mask.

*"And some of us with a really close up perspective can feel that point as it goes from pressing to puncturing, each hit vibrating through my whole damn skull! It's a bit like being inside a bell, and a bit like having a wand buzzing between your legs. Yes, **that** kind of wand. I'm a naughty girl, aren't I? Maybe some big, strong guy will take me in hand and give me a spanking, hmmm? If I could, I promise, I'd lick my glittery lips at the thought."*

The nail emerges out the other side, bloodless and clean.

"Ok in there?"

The assistant doesn't reply, but her hands rest smoothly on the chair.

"No, I can't hear. But just tapping a nail into my skull doesn't hold the audience for long, so he needs to keep quipping."

"Guess she is."

He places the next nail.

"In case you're interested in how it all works, there are very small marks on the supposedly smooth and featureless hood so he can line them up properly. He doesn't have to, but there are some visual cues to hit. It's very weird to feel a nail emerging through my eyeball, let me tell you, no matter how many times it happens. And it happens twice each show. Got to keep things balanced."

"All told there are ten of those thick, long, tortuous nails that drive through my poor, empty little head. None emerge out the back. No one to see it. Three go in each side: temple, cheek and right through my frontal lobes. Makes me a little giddy, but I don't know much of that is, you know, the nails through my freaking brain, and how much is the cocktail of hormones getting me so excited. The others all go in through the back of my skull and come out in 'fun' places. Two through the eyes. I'm told those always get the best screams. One out my mouth, which he always says is to shut me up. Gets a nervous giggle. The gag should be enough, and the nail tastes staticy as well as metallic. Final one gets driven out of my forehead after passing through my entire brain, making me look like a Cenobite unicorn."

The magician pauses, leaving his macabre creation still obviously alive, despite the nails hammered every which way through her skull. "Ta-daaaaa. I know, I know, she's better at that but, well, my assistant is a little...busy right now."

"As you might expect, he calls for people to come up to check things out. If driving those nails in felt weird, which it really, really does, in case you weren't sure, having untrained people wiggling them is super-extra freaky fun."

"But, once they're all satisfied the nails are real and my head is real, (someone always knocks on it. Bastards.) he lets them all go back to their seats and pulls the nails out. Amazingly, the hood isn't

damaged. Hopefully, neither's the pretty blonde underneath. Yes, I know he yanked my hair off but I'm still...philosophically blonde. So there."

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, I'll break the most cardinal of magician's rules and reveal how this trick is done." He says there's often a gasp there,"You see," he crumples the hood between his hands, pulling it away from the assistant's neck. "there was no head there to be hurt by the nails." He squeezes it into a space that couldn't even contain the ball gag, never mind her whole head and even turns it inside out to prove there's nothing there.

*"So, I'm just sitting there. No head left, just a smooth little stump of a neck. Can't see. Can't hear. I know what he's saying, though. Casting doubt that this can be possible. Inviting people up on stage to check my near naked body for tricks again. And once they're there, he 'helpfully' suggests I might be concealing something inside my costume. As if. I'm barely concealing **me** in this. But they'll be nervous until he starts the process and then the ravening wolves will strip me bare. I'll feel their hands all over me, checking every intimate part of me for 'tricks'. And after the show, I will be so horny I will make his magic wand disappear over and over and over!*

"And only then will he put the hood on and bring me back. For round two.

"Sorry, no tickets for that show are on offer."