

PETER AND LISA: CHAPTER 89

I, MAGICIAN?

The offices of IAG, the monthly global meeting, “So, finally, just one thing left...”

Lisa readies herself. “It’s the app, isn’t it?”

”No mind reading. But, now that you mention it, we probably should discuss that.”

”We deffo should. Penn loves it.“ Jean gushes immediately, pausing in licking the back of her furred hand, her triangular ears perking up, ”She’s gotten so many new ideas she probably won’t be human until next year. Which, ok, isn’t that unusual for Penn, but she’s planning on being so many different...”

”Have SAT talked to you about the rollout?” Holli interrupts.

”No. We’re not business partners on this. They were going to create it anyway.”

”Were they? I heard it was your, well, Peter’s idea.”

”Ok, so that is true. It was, but once he mentioned it, it became their project, not ours. UKAG signed it off as compliant with our codes of practice...”

”And got every member a free copy. Why?”

”The logger. If it records literally every magical thing that happens to the assistant, and is under her control, we thought it would be a security device against...”

”Against the Arnies of this world. And, up to a point, it could be. You’re causing me trouble, you know?”

”Apparently I do that a lot.”

”We all do, honey. That’s why we are where we are. The only progress is made by unreasonable men. Or women.”

”So how am I being a pain in your arse this time?”

”I’m getting requests, and more than a few demands, for the same deal of the AG here.”

”Cosigned.” Jenn agrees, “You would not believe how many people want a free toy.”

”Including you?”

”I mean, not not including me. I’m just cute enough that I was able to get it.”

”You were?” Holli asks, “Is everyone getting sweetheart deals out of this except me?! SAT keep telling me they haven’t got the server space to deal with adding the US.”

”Aus is pretty small...” Jenn says placatingly. “And...” she trails off.

”And?”

”And...I did just get the deal for Penn and me. At first. Like, we’ll work for a full deal, but...”

”Well, that makes me feel better. A bit. I was thinking I’d lost my negotiating touch.”

”It’s not like you’d need the help, either. I mean, you’re one of the most...”

”You can say old.”

”I was going to say experienced.”

”Yeah, but you’d have meant old.”

”Either way, you probably already know your way around any trick on the app.”

”Most of them. But you young people will always find ways to surprise me, I’m sure.”

”Some of the things...” Jean blushes, “It’s just going to suck so much waiting for Penn to build up enough oomph to try some of these.”

”What do you mean?”

”Some of the good ones...they just require so much mana, even Penn can’t do them without a magician pushing her.”

”Oh.”

”I know that sound. What’s with the oh?”

”Uhm...I can...the app shows that I...that I have enough mana to do, well, anything on it.”

”Anything?! Like, literally anything?”

”Uhm...”

”How?”

”I don’t know. Should I be worried?”

"No, honey, you shouldn't be worried. You might be on the wrong side of the saw, though."

"What do you..."

"I mean, if you really can do all that? You might need to think about getting some training to be a magician."

"Me? A magician? Two years ago, I thought magic was just tricks."

"Well, guess you're growing up fast."

Later, back at home, "Ok, out with it. What's up?"

"Why should anything be up?"

"You don't pace when things are fine."

"I'm not...there's no need to raise your eyebrows at me."

"If you keep it up, you'll wear a hole in the floor. They took the news about the app that badly?"

"What? Oh, no, that's not it. Jean's practically bouncing at the possibilities and Holli's annoyed she hasn't got the latest toy yet. But neither are unhappy about it."

"So?"

"You are annoyingly persistent, you know? Are you going to be like this when we're married?"

"Of course not." he accepts the incredulous stare, "We're promising to have no secrets from each other, so I won't need to."

"Fine." she stays standing, arms folded defensively, "I'll tell you. I will. But not now. I just, I need some time to think."

"Do you want to destress?"

"While that would be lovely, I think I need to actually exist to think this one through."

"Ok."

"And I think I might need some time alone to think."

"To worry, you mean."

"I promise I'll talk after I've got something to talk about." she turns, heading for the bedroom.

"Hey. Hey!"

"What?"

"Don't I get a kiss for being a supportive fiance?"

She leans down to kiss him on the forehead. "Better, you goof?"

Once alone, she pulls out the suit. "So, are you the cause of my trouble? Spending too much time playing with you? I mean, what else could it..." she looks down at the ring on her finger. "I wi... nope, not doing that." She takes a deep breath, "Oh, fairy godmother, I could use your advice and guidance."

She waits, running her hand along the suit's smooth and shiny surface. "Well, I guess she's not..."

The suit stirs in her hands. Lisa yelps and throws it across the room.

"Ow! What was that for?!" the suit says in a high-pitched voice. The hood shifts and rises up as the fairy struggles to get free, "A little help here? You're the one with the giant muscles to lift this thing."

Lisa stares and slowly moves over to lift it up.

"Thank you." she flits up, hovering in front of Lisa's face, "So, in regards to your request, which I am only responding to because it wasn't a wish, what do you feel you need my advice on?"

"How much do you know about the new app?"

"No idea what you're talking about, dear. I'm not entirely clear what an app is."

"Ok. So there's now a...a piece of tech, I guess you could say, that lets assistants get access to tricks from all over."

"I see."

"And if you don't have sufficient magical power to actually perform the trick yourself, it shows up as grey."

The fairy nods. "Sensible."

"Nothing's greyed out for me."

"I see, I...wait, nothing?! Not one single thing?"

"Nothing. So, apparently, I'm quite powerful."

"Apparently so. No wonder you've taken to the ring so well."

"I'm coming to that. Could the ring be why? Is it safe? Will I...end up like Carrie?"

"So, in order, I think: Possibly. But you haven't been using the w-word like it's going out of fashion, so probably not? You being powerful? It's safe for you, certainly. Ending up like your sister? Well, that's hard to say, but if you haven't been experiencing her problems by now, it's probably unlikely. Or, at least I hope it is."

"Why?"

"Why do I hope it's unlikely? Oh, two reasons, no, three. One, I quite like you and the Hellsings don't, so I'm not keen for you to fall under their tender mercies, and neither should you be. Two, I'm not sure how much chaos you could cause if you did suffer from them. I mean, you're more powerful than she is, so...you can do the maths there."

"And three?"

"Oh, I don't want Peter to suffer that kind of heartbreak again. He did badly when Victoria...fell into trouble. A second time could break him."

"So, if it's safe, what do I do?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, with what Holli said..."

"What did dear Holli say, dear? I wasn't there, if you remember."

"Sorry, sorry. So, she said I should get some training as a magician."

"Well, that's just ridiculous."

"Ridiculous?"

"Ri-dic-u-lous. You're already a magician, even more than most assistants."

"I'm what?!"

"What do you think a magician is, dear? It's someone with magic who can use it to affect the world around them."

"But..."

The fairy sighs, "The magicians have been taking the lead so long they've forgotten what the real distinction is. Assistants used to be apprentices. They can learn to do all the stuff a magician can, eventually. Then the stage shows got involved and that part got forgotten. Anyway, it's nothing to do with being more powerful. They might like to think that to justify them being in charge, but it's not true."

"What?"

"Ok, so, it might be a little true. Affecting yourself is easier than affecting the world. You're not resisting things the way the real world does, so, magicians need a little more power than an assistant, but that doesn't mean they have to. Your Keeper's wife is probably more powerful than a good half the magicians under her care."

"What?"

"You said that. Now, calm, deep breaths. All that being powerful means is that you're powerful. It hasn't changed you in any way. You're still the same bullheaded, obstinate, rude, delightful young woman you were when we first met."

"Wh...Ok, so what does that mean? For me?"

"Whatever you want it to mean. It's your life, your ability. Do you want to be able to affect things outside yourself by yourself? You have the power so it should be possible if you can get the mindset."

"Just like that?"

"Magic is mostly 'just like that', dear. You're telling the world to be different and making it believe you. That's it. Simple. Not easy, obviously, but simple."

"Where would I get..."

"Really? You have a perfectly good fiance to lean on. Now, granted, he's always been more of an instinctive worker, so he might not be a good teacher of the details, but you can be a good student. Just pay attention to everything going on when he does his magic. Open your third eye wide and learn. Once you get started, it's mostly a matter of imagination and willpower, and we know you have the latter in abundance."

"That easy, huh?"

"That simple. Nothing worth it comes easy. Even with magic. Especially with magic."

"I...see. I think"

"Good, good. Try not to burn the place down while you're learning."

"So, how do I start?"

"Small. You can already do some magics on yourself. Just...expand it out. I don't know. Try something. Not on me, though."

"Like what?"

"How should I know, dear? What's something Peter and you do a lot? Not like that, you filthy-minded girl! Or, and I know this will be a novel idea, you could go and talk to Peter. And figure this out together. That's what couples who are engaged do, you know?"

"I'm getting 'please go away and stop bothering me' vibes."

"Maybe a little. I do have a life outside of dealing with your existential crises. Don't call on me too often. But do call. Now, shoo." she makes dismissal waves with her hands.

"It's my room!"

"Purely technically. Go and talk." and she vanishes.

"Well, here we go, I guess." she gets up off the bed, heading for the door.