

PETER AND LISA: CHAPTER 92

LIGHTBULB MOMENTS

The offices of the UKAG*, Lisa sits at her desk, sorting through too many papers, her halo of lights swirling around her head, shifting colours softly. She pushes the papers away, finally done. Which is what makes the thump of another pile so depressing. "Why is there so much paperwork?" she protests. (*=UK Assistant's Guild)

"Talk to your boyfriend. He's supposed to be setting up automated entry."

"Knowing him, he'd just get the forms to fill that in themselves. As long as I don't have to, I don't care."

"Oh, sure, then they start entering data they haven't got and we get to hear Fantasia playing."

"I wi..." she stops herself.

"Why do you do that?"

"Do what?"

"You always stop when you're trying to say 'I wish'. Didn't think you were that superstitious."

"I've learned that wishes can get answered. And it doesn't usually go the way you want."

"Oh, is this another one of your 'I'm a magician now' things?"

"No! This is something older."

"Ohhhhh-kay." Tabitha replies in a way that makes it sound like a question.

"Fine. I've got a fairy not-quite-godmother and she gave me a ring. Only it seems to have grown too fast so it grants wishes. And she really hates it when it does that."

"Right. Obviously. Why didn't I think of that?"

"No need to be snippy." she holds up her hand, her ruby ring superimposing itself over her engagement ring. "There. One fairy ring."

"I believed you! What else does it do?"

"I have no idea. I mean, I can turn into a fairy with it and..."

"You can...Ok, I have to see this."

"No, you don't."

"Yes, I do."

"Do not."

"Do. Do. Do. Do. Do."

"Fine." she concentrates and dwindles before Tabitha's eyes, standing on the desk in doll-sized clothing, arms folded, her black and red wings unfurled behind her.

"Ooooooh, pretty. Do those work?"

In response, the wings flutter and Lisa lifts herself into the air. "Satisfied now?" her tiny, annoyed voice pipes.

"For now. Have you tried doing that without the ring?"

"Of course not. Why would..."

"Because you're a magician now, right? And you're looking for ways to practice, right? Why not give it a try?"

Lisa swells back to her regular size, the wings shrinking away. "You're living out your magic fantasies vicariously, aren't you?"

"No, of course not. I mean, not much, anyway. Maybe a little."

"Uh-huh." she tugs on the ring, feeling a little warm as it comes away. There's a solid clink as she puts it onto the desk. "Here goes nothing." she falls into herself, dwindling down again, her red and black butterfly wings sliding through her clothes as she lowers herself onto the desk, "It worked? It worked!"

"See. You can do this magic stuff."

"Yeah, yeah, laugh it up, you..."

The door to the main office opens, the spring air swirling through. Lisa drops onto the chair, growing as she does, although her wings remain for a moment before she notices and pulls them back into her body. "Hello? Tab, are you there?"

"Ah, perfect timing. Just after your breakthrough. I'm in the back, Allie."

There's the click of heels on the wooden floors as Allie approaches. She wears knee-length black boots with high heels and opaque black tights under her black leather skirt. Her strawberry-blonde hair falls over the shoulders of her long cream-coloured coat, a tight white sweater clinging to her body as a concession against the still present chill. "So, what did you want to..." she stops, "Oh, sorry, I didn't think you'd have company."

"It's fine." Lisa replies, somewhat annoyed. She knows she recognises the woman from somewhere, but can't quite place the voice or face. Allie is clearly going through the same process and reaches it first, standing straighter, a little more imposing in her pose.

"Didn't recognise you without your horns. Boy was terribly disappointed you let him go."

"Boy?...Oh, you're the latex domme."

"I didn't realise you two had met. And I really can't imagine how."

"Samhain."

"Oh, that definitely explains the how. Anyway, Allie, here's your pupil."

"Her what?"

"My what?"

Both turn to look at Tabitha who shrugs, "You're struggling being an assistant who might be a magician. Allie is a magician and an assistant. Perfect match."

"Surely you cannot be serious."

"I am serious. And don't call me Shirley." she replies.

"Funny. So what am I supposed to even do?"

"Figure it out. You're both smart. Toodles."

"You're going?"

"Only back to 'my' office. I still owe you drinks, after all."

She walks out. Allie and Lisa stare at each other across the desk.

"Sorry?"

Allie shrugs. "So, what problem does she think I can solve for you? I only met her because I couldn't solve my own shit properly."

Lisa flicks her finger and the lights circle around.

"That doesn't really explain..."

Lisa sighs. "I can do magician type magic, or, at least, people tell me I can."

"Right. And?"

"And I'm the person in charge of the assistants' guild, not the magicians'."

"Right. And? Sorry, I'm still not seeing..."

"I can't run an assistants' guild while I'm a magician!"

Allie blinks at the vehemence. "Ok. I can sort of see how that would be a problem but, look, are you a member of SORM*?" (*=Society of Real Magicians)

"No."

"So where's the conflict?"

"I can..."

"No, I get it. You can do proper magic, so everyone's telling you you're a magician and you should be a magician and you can't run a guild for assistants if you're a magician because that would be seriously inappropriate."

"Yes. So what am..."

"I said everyone else says you're a magician. What do you say?"

"What?"

"Are you an assistant? Or a magician? Or both?"

"How can you be both! That's..."

"Some people like to be on both ends of the saw. Sometimes I like to be a 'helpless plaything' for some cruel-eyed magician. And sometimes I like to be the cruel-eyed magician tormenting my helpless playthings. And so, I'm both, as the situation and my mood dictates."

"I'm not sure I'm anyone's helpless plaything."

"Uh-huh. So there's nobody you let put you into impossible situations, trusting that they'll let you out of them?"

Lisa colours, her lights traitorously turning pink to make it more obvious.

"See? Sometimes you prefer to be under the saw, sometimes holding it. So you're both."

"But..."

"Or, you're an assistant who can do her own tricks. Nothing says you have to be a magician just because you can."

"I..."

"Which I admit would be a shame for me personally. I've got an itch that needs scratching and I'm kind of on the outs with magicians at the moment."

"I don't under..."

Allie pulls out a thick collar, a short guide sticking out the front and back. "Well, how's about I take my tutoring fee in kind? I haven't done much for you, so all you need to do is stick something through my throat."

"What?"

"Traditionally it's a sword," Allie replies as she buckles the collar into place, "but anything long and thin enough will do. Yes, even one of those a time or two, but I don't think you're equipped for that."

"I..."

"So, what do you have around here that would work?"

"I..."

"Well, if you're not up to it..." she reaches up to unbuckle the collar.

"Wait."

"Yes?"

"Fine, But tell Tabitha I wasn't manipulated into doing it just because you taunted me."

Allie smiles, "Of course. Definitely not manipulated. Not at all. So, what are you planning on piercing me with?"

Lisa returns the smile wickedly, "Oh, I think I have the perfect thing." she reaches into her bag, lifting out the black rod of her lightsabre. "But I don't think you'll need that ugly collar."

"I won't? But Tab said you weren't..."

"I thought you liked being a helpless plaything to a cruel-eyed magician. Don't you trust me?"

"I mean, I don't know you. All I know is the devil girl and the, quite frankly, scary head of the UKAG."

"And yet you're still trusting me enough to let me ram things through your throat. So why not trust me a little more?"

"I trust the collar to work. I..."

Lisa walks around the desk. "Sitting or standing?" she asks, suddenly seeming in control of the space.

Allie promptly sits down, pulling her hair over her shoulder to expose the back of the collar. She stiffens as she feels the end of the rod contact the collar.

"Ready?"

She nods, licking her suddenly dry lips. The next moment she gasps as a bolt of heat shoots through her neck, the brilliant blade of white light extending out into her vision.

"How's that?"

Allie swallows. It's not as intense as a sword, but the light has its own crackling, tingling warmth to it that's distracting. "It's good." she croaks, pressing her thighs together. Lisa draws the blade back, pulling it out of her.

"Would you like to try it again? Without the collar?"

Allie swallows again, the situation falling out of her control far faster than she thought, "Yes, Mistress." She reaches up for the collar and is quite unprepared for the blade to erupt out of her chest, glowing through her thin sweater. She looks down, breathing a little more heavily. "I...I think you're getting the hang of being a magician." she gasps huskily, "But next time...can you pull my hair?"

Later that night, Lisa makes it home, “You're late. Problems?”

“Tell you about it later, Magic Boy” she replies, dropping into his lap, curling up as her clothes vanish into a furry kitten form, “Oh, and I've got another order for one of your lightsabres.”