

MAGICIAN AND HIS TOYS: PART 22

PARTING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW

"But why do I have to stay behind?" the Brunette plaintively wails.

"It's a private thing. I don't need both of you."

"And he's taking the best."

"That's not..."

"So why are you taking Miss Tits-a-lot?"

"I picked randomly, ok?!"

"Randomly? I've been eenie-meened out of the fun?!"

"Actually, it was a coin toss."

"And that means you get to deal with whichever flying monkey gets sent here." the Blonde taunts.

The Brunette's eyes narrow, "Is this why you're taking this last-minute private performance?"

"No. No. Of course not." Malcolm looks at his watch. "Well, we'll have to go if we want to get there on time." The Blonde collapses into a playing card which he quickly pockets and is out the door before the Brunette can really protest. She stares at the door and finally settles for throwing a plate across the kitchen.

"Hey, hey, what are you so upset about?!" the Rubberdoll asks as her head snakes into the room, her body catching her up.

"He's taken the Blonde out for a private show."

"Yeah, so?"

"So?!"

"I mean, he only needs one of you, right?"

"That's not the point!"

"Uh-huh. So what is the point?"

"It's unfair!"

"Unfair? Because he's not taking you both along?"

"Exactly! If she gets more fun than I do..."

"Never thought I'd see jealousy in a toy."

The Brunette stops. "You don't understand. We're *both* his toys. That's the point. If she's getting used more than me..."

"Sounds downright unfair." the Triplet agrees.

"Thank..."

"What are you doing?! I thought we agreed you'd hide this time!"

The Triplet waves her hand dismissively, "It's Alexandra. They'll be cool with this."

"How do you know?"

"That it's Alexandra? Or that they'll be cool with it?"

"That it, I mean, how do...both!"

"I know it's Alexandra because I saw her leave. I've got eyes in the enemy camp, remember?"

"And the other question?"

"Well, me and Alexandra go way back..."

"Why do you keep saying 'Alexandra'? I mean, that's a mouthful when Alex is right there."

"I might call Alexis Alex, but Alexandra is Alexandra."

"Huh?" the Brunette asks, looking thoroughly confused at the introduction of another person into the conversation.

"She's the opposite of me. I'm one mind in many bodies, she's many minds in..." a black lace fingerless glove wraps over her mouth from behind.

"I knew my ears were burning. Is someone telling tales out of school? Whatever shall we do with that wagging tongue of yours, Heather?" she pulls her hand away, revealing smooth skin where the Triplet's mouth should be. Alexandra steps out from behind her, her long hair black streaked with gold or golden curls streaked with black. Her skin is tanned with black teardrop tattoos under her eyes that flicker between brilliant baby blue and inky purple. Her arms are clad in fingerless black

net gloves that reach up to her shoulders, ripped fishnet stockings leafing up to a bright pink flared skirt and brilliantly white t-shirt.

“New look, Alexandra?”

“You could say that. Alexis and Sandra are getting better at sharing.”

“Who's Alexis? Who's Sandra?!” the Brunette plaintively asks.

“I am.” Alexandra replies.

“You are what?”

“I am they. They are me.”

“She means that...” The Triplet starts before her mouth vanishes again. “You know I can...” and again, “...keep making new...mouths every...time you...do this, Alex...andra. What's the...point?”

“I suppose you're right.”

“Damn right I'm...” her mouth falls off, tumbling to the counter top.

Alexandra snatches it up and places the back onto her palm. “There. Now you'll be quiet unless you want to borrow from your sisters but you can't know Glinda won't notice.”

The Triplet stops patting at her face and raises her middle finger instead.

“Now, as I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted, Sandra and Alexis came together. One liked to be in pieces, the other liked to disappear. I don't know that they intended to create me, probably not, but, nonetheless, they became one and that one is me.”

The Triplet holds up a scrawled piece of paper 'I was going to say that!'

“I know, but I much prefer to tell my own story. You always leave out details.”

The triplet starts writing. 'Can I get my mouth back? Now? Pleeeeeeease!'

Alexandra smiles wickedly. “Not just yet. Maybe before I go. If you're good. You can be good, can't you, Heather?”

“So, you're, like, two people in one?”

“That depends. When they're cooperating, it's more like I am one person with their traits. Sandra's energy, Alexis' control. When they're not, I am subsumed and they flow into each other to control the body. Alexis is from a family of witches who apprenticed to Mistress Jane before she took on her regrettable niece, while Sandra is a law school graduate who found a better career.”

“Law school?!”

Alexandra's hair turns golden, her eyes both baby blue, “What? Like it's hard?” Sandra replies before Alexandra resumes control over her body.

“So, yes, I'm three people in one more than I am two, but one of those people is unique to the combination.”

“And is a control freak.” the Triplet adds before her mouth vanishes and reappears. “Hah. Glinda only needs one of me so...”

“Yes, Vanishing you really doesn't work, does it?” she rakes her hand through the air in the Triplet's direction and her body falls apart, four lines slicing through her diagonally. “Let's see if you enjoy this.”

“I mean, you know she does. That's why she provokes you.”

“I know. Alexis has known the Heathers since they were twins, don't forget. But it's still fun.” she peels the mouth off her palm and tosses it over into the pile around the Triplet's legs. She gives a casual flick of her wrist and the Triplet's legs collapse as easily as her torso.

“Hey!!”

“You were asking for it, dear.”

“Uhm, can I actually ask for it?” The Brunette asks raising her hand.

“Oh? What exactly are you asking for, dear?” she asks, turning her heterochromatic eyes onto the Brunette.

The Brunette glances at the twitching pile of the Triplet, “Like that? But...more.”

“More? How many helpless, quivering, little pieces would you like to be in?”

The Brunette takes a deep breath as the Triplet tries to assemble herself into some sort of order.

“How many have you got?”

“Oh, delightful.” she rubs her hands, “Lexi, dear, what *is* my record these days?”

“For you? Or on someone else? Because you've been in inch wide cubes and wanted more.”

“Does that sound good for you, dear?”

The Brunette swallows, her mouth suddenly dry. “Can't you do smaller than that?” she says, trying to make it sound less like a plea and more like a challenge.

Alexandra's eyes widen. “Oh, I do like you. You and Sandra will get on famously. But, smaller you say. Well, I'll have to see what I can do, won't I? Now, hold still, this might take a little bit to get going.”

“Ooooookay.” the Brunette stands up straight, her eyes shining.

Alexandra gestures. A wire-frame cuboid, the vertices made of wispy shadows appears around the Brunette. As Alexandra continues to gesture, murmuring something through her black and pink painted lips each face splits into quarters, more shadow lines bisecting them. The quarters each become quarters of themselves and those quarter again and again and again until it's hard to see the Brunette inside the mesh of shadows.

The Rubberdoll extends her finger out, narrowing it to fit through the increasingly small gap between the shadowy lines when they quarter again and the tip of her finger slices neatly off.

“I'm going to need that back.”

“Serves you right for interfering, dear. Now, step back.” she closes her hands into a fist and the lattice collapses into a pinprick.

For a moment, the Brunette stands there, confused about what's supposed to happen. But then gravity reasserts itself and she tumbles apart like a human shaped tower of dice, the tiny cubes spreading around her in a fleshy avalanche.

“There. I think that's a new record for our eager friend.”

Several pieces of dark skin stretch and wriggle free, reattaching to the Rubberdoll's finger.

“Well, now, if you've got yourself back together, dear, shall we see what we can find for dear Glinda?”

The Brunette's smile spreads across every little cube it can as they walk towards the trunk,. “I cannot wait to tell Jess about my day.” her many mouths whisper, “She'll just plotz with jealousy.”

“Aha!” the Triplet cries triumphantly as she assembles herself on the floor, “You *do* have names!”