

## **A Human's Guide to Surviving Magical Mishaps by Kit Bryan Chapter 3**

### **Rule 3- Life's a costume party; the prize? A killer first impression.**

In fact, not only is he not wearing a shirt, the man is ONLY wearing a pair of odd looking leather trousers. He doesn't even have shoes! Although I can see a gold chain catching the light from around his neck. It has some kind of pendant made of a black stone attached to it. He has raven black hair which is just long enough to fall in his face slightly and he seems to be quite tall. I have to crane my neck to see his face. I can't tell what colour his eyes are in the dark, but even in the poor lighting I am completely sure this is the most perfect looking man I have ever seen in my entire life. This HAS to be the fae we came to meet. He immediately releases me, steadying me back onto my feet before he steps back. I ignore the heat in my face and start my sentence over.

"Thanks, I really didn't feel like going for a dip in the creek." The fae man nods and flashes me a polite smile.

"You are welcome." My first thought is that his voice is as delicious as my favourite chocolate. I shake the thought from my head, delicious maybe, but probably just as bad for my health. I open my mouth to speak again, but I am interrupted by the mayor who has finally noticed the fae. The mayor speaks in a stern tone which contrasts greatly with the friendly tone that he used to greet my father upon our arrival. Not a good sign for the upcoming meeting.

"Hello, allow me to introduce myself. I am mayor Kenneth Simmons and this here is Police Chief Darren Fall. It seems you have already met his daughter Katerina Fall." The fae man flashes a quick smile and I guess it is probably because of my last name and the fact that he just rescued me from a fall. I have to actively work not to make a silly face at the fae and I remind myself that this meeting is meant to be professional. Although the hot shirtless guy is definitely a fun surprise. The Mayor continues, unaware of the joke.

"She had a spot of car trouble on her way home, it seems Chief Fall had no option but to bring her along. I hope you don't mind." As he speaks he holds out his right hand for the fae man to shake. The fae takes it with the wrong hand and shakes it once, awkwardly. The motion seems uncomfortable for him, sort of awkward like he has never done it before. I suppose that it is

entirely possible that he hasn't. Do fae usually shake hands? I wonder. After that is done, my dad rather reluctantly takes his turn and shakes the fae man's hand. He reaches out and grabs the fae's right hand, correcting the gesture. I feel like there was probably a less weird way to do that.

"I am called Ashton Rallowend." The fae man states plainly. Mayor Simmons leads the group back towards the light of the lantern where we can see better. There is an awkward silence as Mayor Simmons and my dad take in the half-dressed fae. I notice that they seem less than impressed. Unsurprising considering that dad is in his full formal uniform and the mayor is probably in his best suit. Even his greying hair is combed neatly out of his face. The two of them are probably melting from the heat. I am not really aware of the Mayor's attitude towards the fae. He probably put out a public statement at some point that is all politically correct and doesn't offend anyone but that doesn't mean he really believes it. I do know however that my dad would not be pleased. He has rather traditional beliefs in most cases and is quite fond of formalities which this fae clearly does not adhere to, probably because he doesn't know them. As for myself, I suddenly feel a lot less self-conscious of my mostly casual outfit. The fae man speaks again, drawing my attention back to the conversation.

"I will speak plainly. There is a problem in the fae realm which will affect you here. Our King has been murdered. The criminals responsible for the crime have escaped into your realm and are hiding here. There are three of them. I am here to capture them and return them for sentencing or to execute them myself if that cannot be accomplished. I requested your law enforcement be here as I may require their assistance. I will also require a guide to assist me as I am not familiar with this realm. I believe it should be obvious that it is unwise to allow these fae criminals to run amok in your realm as they have the magic required to do a considerable amount of damage should they remain unchecked." Woah, that was a lot to take in. I think we all might need a second to process that one. I didn't even know the fae HAD royalty. I guess they work on a monarchy system then?

The fae man, Ashton he had said his name was, gave his explanation in a serious tone, he keeps his face straight, although the tension in his shoulders tells me that he is super tense and probably not nearly as emotionless as he is presenting himself. Oddly, I also notice that Ashton is squinting. He kept his gaze focused intently on the Mayor and my dad as he spoke, but he seems super uncomfortable. As soon as he finished giving his explanation, he averted his eyes and turned his face slightly to the side. I watch him curiously as I tried to figure out his strange movements. After a moment I realised he is

turning away from the electric lantern. As the Mayor, her father and Ashton begin discussing the details of the escaped criminals as well as what Ashton will need to hunt them down, I take the chance to edge over towards the lantern and turn the little down dial to dim the light slightly. Mayor Simmons looks over at me, confused by my actions and my dad seems irritated. Maybe I should have asked... Ashton the fae however, smiles at me gratefully.

"Thank you." he comments. I nod and return his smile, glad I interpreted his actions correctly.

"You're welcome." I respond. The Mayor looks back and forth between us, confused. Ashton explains for me before either of them can ask.

"Miss Fall seems to have observed my discomfort with your light. It is a common side effect of travelling long distances in portals. It will fade in a few hours. That is why I requested we meet in the evening rather than in the daylight hours." The fae explains, flashing me another stunning smile.

"Yes, well... alright." Mayor Simmons nods. I'm starting to think that the man is uncomfortable around the fae, although he is doing an admirable job of hiding it. My dad steps in and rescues him from his awkwardness.

"So, what it comes down to is that you will need a full time guide as well as somewhere to stay as you are unaccustomed to our realm and, at least at first, will have difficulty navigating it without causing trouble. It would also be useful if this guide was someone that myself or Mayor Simmons know well enough to trust." he sums up. The fae nods his acceptance. While it is perfectly logical that a fae travelling the human realm for the first time would need a trusted guide, truthfully, I bet the real reason for that particular addition is that the Mayor and my dad actually want someone loyal enough to them to report the fae's behaviour and spy on him. Which is fair I suppose but probably not the best way to build trust. Besides, he's one guy. How much damage could he do?