

A Human's Guide to Surviving Magical Mishaps by Kit Bryan Chapter 8

Rule 8- Embrace context, it's the punchline of

communication.

"Is there something about my appearance that offends or displeases you?" Well now I've gone and done it. I can't help but blush. I have to fight to keep from drooling over the guy, and he is worried that his appearance might offend me? The entire idea is laughable.

"No, no, it's nothing like that. It is just kind of an expectation here that pretty much everyone wears a shirt of some kind. It is considered terribly casual to go without; in a woman's case, it is considered indecent." Ashton seems surprised. What do they normally wear?

"Even in this warm weather?" he questions.

"Yes. Particularly when in a formal meeting, a proper shirt is expected. It doesn't bother me, but it was probably a contributing factor to my dad's hostility towards you. He and Simmons would have considered you to be half-naked while they were dressed in their best clothes." Ashton seems thoughtful and maybe a little frustrated.

"And this is why your father was so reluctant to leave you alone with me? Because I am not dressed to their expectations?" I shrug.

"Partly, but dad is quite overprotective of me. He doesn't really like me talking to any guys. Unless he knows them really well and has already managed to scare the life half-out of them as a warning. He also doesn't trust you because you're fae. He doesn't know much about fae or what you are capable of or really anything about what to expect from you. It makes him uncomfortable. He doesn't like not being in control, and he doesn't like not knowing what is going on. Don't take it too personally; it wouldn't really matter who you are. He doesn't trust people very much, and especially not around me.

I think it's a side effect of his job. He tends to expect the worst of people." Ashton remains quiet for a moment as he processes my

explanation.

“So you are telling me that I have offended your father’s sensibilities. Yet you are unaffected?” I laugh nervously.

“I wouldn’t say that. More like I’m just being reasonable about it. It’s not like I haven’t seen at

with his shirt off before at the beach and stuff.” Despite my words, I could feel a blush

guy

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creeping up my neck. Ashton laughs, **and** I swat at his **arm**.

“Oh stop it! I’ll make sure to grab something of dad’s for you to wear tomorrow . Shirts are required at my work. They won’t let you in without one. I work in a clothing store, **so** you **can** pick out some clothes of your own while we’re there.” Ashton freezes and stares at me in the dim light. I stare back, confused. It is just bright enough that I should be able to make out his eye colour, but I can’t tell for sure. At first glance, I did think that at they were green, but they aren’t. Maybe they’re more blue? Or brown... I really need to see them in the daylight to be

sure.

“Ash- I mean,

to relax.

Mr. Rallowend. Is something wrong?” I ask nervously. Eventually, the fae begins

“You may call me Ashton... Katerina. Everything is fine, I was just... thinking. Our homes are very different.” he answers vaguely.

“Anything you feel like sharing?” I ask. Ashton leans in a little closer.

“Well, I-

” a sudden knocking at the door makes me jump. Ashton leaps to his feet and whirls towards the sound.

“Oh, it’s probably just our food.” I move to answer the door.

“Please, allow me. I doubt the criminals I am chasing would show up and knock on the front door, but it’s best to be safe.” Before I have a chance to reply, Ashton makes his way back down the hall and swings the front door open. The delivery girl is maybe a few years older than me and judging based on her mortified expression, she is terribly flustered by the half-naked Fae at the door. She can’t stop staring. I want to pat her on the arm and commiserate. I know the feeling. The girl finally notices me standing behind Ashton. We have met a couple of times when I have ordered food in the past.

I squeeze my way past Ashton and accept the food.

“Is this a friend of yours Kat?” She asks, her voice oddly high-pitched.

“A new friend, yes.” I agree conversationally.

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“And he’s a, a... not from around here?” she confirms. Ashton decides to answer her himself.

“I am Fae, so I am **not** from this realm.” He answers smoothly. I can practically see the girl’s **knees** shaking.

“I- I... you..” she stammers. I decide to save the girl from her own awkwardness. She is getting redder and redder with every word she fails to get out.

I thank her for the delivery and usher Ashton back inside, closing the door behind us.

“I do not understand. Did I do something wrong?” he questions. I laugh.

“Not at all. She was just a little... distracted? Or nervous might be a better fit. She was not expecting this.... when she knocked on the door.” I wave a hand in Ashton’s general direction. He raises an eyebrow.

“I’m just saying she was surprised to see you, that’s all.” Ashton seems concerned by my statement.

“Is my being Fae really that obvious? I had thought I was doing rather a good job of maintaining my glamour.” His what now? Is he wearing some kind of magical disguise? **Do** all fae do that? It might explain why they all seem to be so damn attractive. If you’re going to

magically disguise yourself, of course you’re going to make yourself hotter, right?

“I no, that’s not it. She was just surprised because of how you look. Again, you not wearing a shirt probably contributed. What were you saying about your glamour?” I try to change the subject, but Ashton isn’t having it.

“So it is again a case of my state of dress being objectionable. I will have to remedy this before going out tomorrow.” He definitely sounds frustrated now.

“I really doubt she was objecting.” I mutter to myself.

“What do you mean?” Ashton asks. Oops, I might have momentarily forgotten how good his hearing is.

“Oh come on. You know how you look. She was nervous because you are seriously hot.” I give

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in and just tell the truth. It’s better than the misunderstanding. Besides, isn’t that what he’s paying me for? To **explain** situations like this?

“What does my temperature have to do with my appearance and how would that make her nervous?” I can’t help but laugh at that one. Whatever spell they did to teach him English clearly wasn’t as thorough as it could have been. I wonder how much he actually understands and how much he is figuring out through context clues.

“Sorry, sorry. Uhm, hot doesn’t always refer to your temperature; it’s the same as saying you are really handsome or attractive.” I am too busy laughing to even be embarrassed anymore. The moment Ashton understands, a slight smirk of male satisfaction crosses his face.

“Oh, stop it. Don’t let it go to your head. I’m sure you don’t need the ego boost. Now come **sit** down, and we can eat.” I tell him off and head back to the living room.

Chapter Comments

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