

A Human's Guide to Surviving Magical Mishaps by Kit Bryan Chapter 1

Rule 1- Always keep a spare tyre... or maybe two.

I scream as my car spins off the road, the world moving past me alarmingly fast. I slam my foot down on the brakes as I clutch the steering wheel with all my strength, yanking it to the side and trying to guide the out of control vehicle towards the empty stretch of grass by the side of the road. Amazingly, the car comes to a stop directly in the middle of the grass stretch, well away from anything that could have caused a serious collision. In fact, to my surprise I find that I am completely uninjured as I stiffly climb from the vehicle, adrenaline coursing through me. I take a few deep breaths to steady myself as I stand there for a moment staring at my car. At least it felt like a moment, but when I grab my phone from my pocket, I realise that I have been standing and staring for closer to fifteen minutes. I shake myself into action. It will be dark soon and I know better than to hang out alone on a poorly lit street after dark, I'm not stupid. I have no idea what just happened. I was just driving home from work, singing along loudly to the radio when suddenly I lost control of my car and went flying off the road. It is a miracle that I wasn't hurt and that the accident wasn't way worse. I thank my lucky stars that there weren't any other cars on the road and that there had been an empty space to drive into. Really, it was quite fortunate as far as unfortunate events go. The cause of the accident is immediately obvious when I walk around and look over my car. My vehicle is a four-wheel drive, but a small one. It also happens to be painted sky blue and really it looks like it belongs in a cartoon rather than on the road, but I love it. The only visible issue with the car is the wheels. The front ones to be exact. Both of them are ruined. It is no wonder I had trouble controlling the vehicle. I can't believe I even managed to make it off the road safely!

"How on Earth did this happen?" I wonder aloud. I must have run over something, I conclude. Nothing else makes any sense as my tires had been in fairly good condition when I left work only twenty minutes earlier. A honking horn from another car shakes me from my thoughts. I turn to see an elderly man peering out the window of his car as he idles on the road.

"You okay there sweetheart? Did you need a hand?" he asks. I smile at him reassuringly. He doesn't give off creeper vibes and I consider myself to be a fairly decent judge of character.

"I'm fine thank-you. Just a burst tire. My dad will come get me, don't worry about it." After a little more back and forth and general pleasantries the gentleman drives away and I make my phone call. The phone rings repeatedly and for a moment I worry that my dad isn't going to answer, which would be a first. Dad never misses my phone calls, he is about as overprotective as a father can be, something that is only enabled by the fact that he is also the chief of police. There is a click as he answers my call.

"Hey Kitty Kat." he says. I roll my eyes at the childish nickname, I think sometimes he forgets that I'm an actual adult now. He still speaks to me like a toddler sometimes.

"Hi dad." I respond easily, not commenting on the nickname. Okay, so maybe I am a little to blame for indulging the pet names. I just feel like it might be sad if he were to stop. He's not always the most affectionate person and the pet names (along with his overprotectiveness) are probably one the main ways he shows that he cares. I don't want to complain and risk hurting his feelings.

"Don't freak out, but I need your help. The tires on my car burst and I ran off the road. I'm totally fine and my car didn't even hit anything. But can you come get me? I'm just off the main road on that grass strip, you know the one. I'm going to have to call a tow truck and get new tires and I don't want to be hanging here after dark." I speak as calmly as I can manage, hoping to avoid sending my dad into a spiralling panic. I'm trying not to panic. I really can't afford to fix my car so hopefully it is just the tyres. I have a bit of money set aside, but I'm not rich, I mean hello, I work retail! I'm alarmed to hear swearing on the other end of the line.

"Um... dad?" I question. It's not like I've never heard him swear before, but the language isn't something my father commonly uses, at least not around me.

"Sorry Kat. I'm on my way. This is just bad timing is all. I won't have time to drop you home, I have an important meeting, I'll have to take you with me." he explains. Ooh, this sounds interesting. He doesn't usually have such late night meetings. I want to know more, but I know my dad hates talking on the phone while driving so I figure it can wait a few minutes.

"That's fine dad. Thanks, I'll see you in a few." With that done, I hang up the phone and go to sit in my car. Mostly so that I can turn on the engine and run the air conditioner. The sun is going down but it is still blisteringly warm since it is right in the middle of summer.

Dad doesn't take long to arrive at all. I've probably only been waiting about five minutes when his police car rolls up, sirens running. I have to fight the desire to roll my eyes at his dramatics as I climb out of the car.

"The sirens dad, really?"

"I told you I was in a hurry honey. Hop in, you can make your phone calls as we drive." I jump into the front passenger seat and dad turns off the siren as he drives which is a relief because it is REALLY loud. He is quiet long enough for me to arrange a tow truck for my car but as soon as I'm off the phone he starts speaking in a rush and I realise how tense he is.

"So this meeting, you'll have to come with me. I'd leave you in the car but I don't know how long it will take." he explains. I nod my agreement, not wanting to cause trouble since I'm basically crashing his meeting. He sighs before he continues.

"You should probably know this meeting is quite important, sweetie. The mayor will be there and we are actually meeting with a fae." He admits warily. My eyebrows shoot up to my hairline. Sure, us humans have known about the fae existing for about five years now since they accidentally stumbled their way into the human realm. Apparently some fae guy got super wasted or whatever the fae equivalent of it is and tried taking a portal home or something and somehow ended up in a totally different realm because apparently that is something that can happen. Not quite how they imagined revealing their existence to humans I bet! I don't know if they actually knew about us before the whole incident though.

Still, aside from knowing that the fae actually exist, we don't know a lot about them. They mostly keep to themselves, not liking our busy and industrialised human realm. Us humans have no magic or any way to create a portal to visit the fae realm so thus far no one has visited as far as I know. I suppose a fae could take a human there but I don't think any have, or at least no one has admitted to it. No one that I believe that is. It's kind of an awkward situation and one where very little progress is being made between our two realms because honestly... What can humans even do about it? Aside from the occasional political meeting where the fae assured our politicians that they aren't planning on taking over the world or anything, there is really very little interaction between the fae and us. The lack of accurate information doesn't stop the media from talking though.