

## **A Human's Guide to Surviving Magical Mishaps by Kit Bryan Chapter 15**

**Rule 15- Never underestimate the power of a well- timed eye roll or a shared sense of humour when**

**dealing with workplace absurdities.**

Ashton looks really out of place in the unnatural lighting of the store. I'm not sure if it's because he isn't wearing shoes or because he looks like he should be in some fancy designer place rather than a big chain retail store. Or maybe it's because he looks at everything with wide eyes rather than the frustration or annoyance that most of the staff have when turning up to work at this hour. I enter in the code to let us in through the employee entrance and explain to Ashton on what I'm doing as I go. The lights inside are already on so I'm guessing that Marcus, the store manager, is already here. I should probably check in with him or he's going to think Ashton is a shoplifter or something. I consider leaving Ashton behind to browse or something but I don't want to leave him alone until I've explained his presence.

"Uh, let's check in with my manager so I can try to explain why you're here. I'm really hoping no one will mind. But they might insist on making you wait outside until the store opens. I think Marcus will be okay with it though. He's an okay guy." I comment as I lead Ashton through the store to the offices at the back where I assume Marcus will be getting ready for the day. I see Stacy, one of the other staff members setting up a register as we pass and I wave at her but I'm not sure she even notices me because she's too busy staring at Ashton and probably wondering if she is still asleep if her drowsy and confused expression is

anything to go by.

As I predicted, Marcus is in the main office. Marcus is about ten years older than me, but we get along pretty well. He is just as sarcastic as I am. He looks up as we enter, crosses his arms over his chest and raises an eyebrow.

"What's this email I've received from the MAYOR stating that you will need to be placed on leave from work, starting tomorrow 'until further notice? What does that even mean? And why do you have what I can only assume is either an underwear model or a fae following you into the office?" He demand

s. I cringe. Ashton opens his mouth to speak but I place a hand on his elbow to stop him and shake my head.

“Sorry Marcus. I didn’t mean to screw up your schedules. You’re going to have to find someone else to banter with. I know you’re going to be absolutely desolate without me, you are going to have to find a way to soldier on.” I say dramatically. Marcus sighs and drapes

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1/4

Rule 15- Never underestimate the power of a well-timed eye roll or a shared sense of...

a hand over his forehead in a fake swoon.

“How ever will I go on without you around to sass me and to tell me whenever someone with

truly atrocious hair comes into the store?” He complains. I laugh.

“Or shoes. Don’t forget the terrible shoes. Remember the leopard print crocs.” I remind him. He nods solemnly.

“I don’t think I could ever forget. Now are you going to explain the sex on a stick you’ve brought into the store or should I just assume that’s my birthday present?” Marcus winks at Ashton who looks uncomfortable and VERY confused.

“Play nice Marcus, or maybe be less nice. I’m not **sure** what the situation calls for. Anyway, This is Ashton. As you guessed before he is a fae and with the mayor’s blessing, he’s hiring me to play tour guide for a bit while **he’s** visiting. It was a last minute thing or I wouldn’t have dreamed of screwing up your perfectly arranged schedules. I did stipulate that I would do the shift I promised to work today though.” I admit. Marcus grins.

“And you’re an angel for that. Pete called in sick five minutes ago so we’re short staffed.” He

sighs and I grimace. Ugh, that’s not ideal.

“We can manage. I’ll be super friendly and if any customers give me lip I’ll tie a bow on them and send them your way. They can be your birthday present.” I smirk at him and he rolls his

eyes.

“How kind of you. I don’t think I want a present from you after all.” He says dryly.

“Well if you’re sure. Anyway, I’m hoping you won’t mind if Ashton hangs around while I’m working today. I also need to go help him get some clothes and some shoes. He apparently packs light.” Marcus waves a hand dismissively.

“Sure, sure. Hey, you think we could make money if we charge people to look at him? It might make a good side hustle.” he grins and I snort out a laugh.

“You just want an excuse to dress him up and stare.” I point out.

“Like you don’t?” He sasses back. Ashton finally gets sick of listening to us banter and speaks

2/4

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“I am unsure if I am understanding your conversation correctly but I gather that it is

acceptable for me to be here. Also that you both make many jokes pertaining to me.” He looks

down at **me** and I blush.

“Yeah, sorry about that. We didn’t mean to be rude. We’re just being silly. We like to argue and joke with each other. But anyway, this is my supervisor and friend Marcus.” I introduce him properly. I probably should have done that at the beginning but Marcus distracted me with his banter. Marcus steps around his desk and holds out a hand to Ashton to shake. Ashton awkwardly takes it and shakes it like he did with my dad and the mayor yesterday. Marcus however doesn’t immediately release his hand.

“Just to be sure, you don’t play for my team do you?” he asks bluntly. Ashton frowns, clearly not understanding the question.

“Or maybe you play both sides?” Marcus continues hopefully. Ashton looks at me desperately.

“He’s asking if **you** enjoy romantic or sexual relationships with men, women or both.” I supply. Understanding lights Ashton’s face and he carefully extricates his hand from Marcus’

grip.

“I am afraid that I am doomed to spend my life attempting to woo and understand females,

as hopeless as the task may be.” Ashton responds and after a moment of silence, Marcus and I both burst out laughing.

“You’re not wrong buddy. I wish you luck with that because if your fae women are anything like human women, say for example Kat... you’re going to need it.” He grins.

“Hey!” I object. Ashton smiles mischievously.

“I have only just met Katerina but I suspect that she is particularly unique.” He answers and I glare at them both.

“I don’t think I like it that you two are getting along. So I’m going to leave. Ashton we should go try and get your shopping done before I have to start work. We only have a few minutes.” I

point out.

3/4

Rule 15- Never underestimate the power of a well-timed eye roll or a shared sense of...

“Take your time. Technically you’re still helping a paying customer and we won’t be busy this early in the morning.” Marcus comments.

“Thanks Marcus, and happy birthday.” I wave as we leave the office and head back out to the store floor. I stop and look Ashton up and down..

“Alright, first up, shoes.” I decide. Marcus might have been joking about dressing Ashton up but he wasn’t completely wrong. This is going to be fun.

Chapter Comments