

A Lesson in Magic

Lesson 4- Say sorry when you've hurt someone—it helps to make things right.

I stare in disbelief.

“What? You can’t just keep me here. What if that monster comes back again? I won’t be able to run away!” I point out. There are about a million other reasons why I don’t want to be magically trapped in a single building, but I figure I should start with the life threatening ones.

I could argue that I have a job I need to go to, I need to earn money and all. But even I can see the arguments against that one. I work with kids, if that monster IS going to come back, I can’t put them at risk. But still, it’s not like I can stay here forever.

“You will be safe here.” Torin answers simply. And I believe him, dammit.

“But... You can’t keep me here forever. That’s not fair. I didn’t do anything to you.” I insist. Laura elbows me. Apparently arguing with the boss isn’t advised, although he doesn’t seem all that bothered by my complaining.

“It’s not fair for us all to be put at risk because Torin saved your life either. You seem nice, really. But please understand, we can’t just... Trust you.” She pleads.

I can tell she isn’t keen on doing this binding spell thing either. She seems uncomfortable with the idea of trapping me here. I’m pretty sure Laura is a legitimately nice person. Being ordered to trap someone against their will is probably really difficult for her. I think it through. If the problem is that they can’t trust me, that doesn’t mean I’ll be stuck here forever, right?

It just means I’ll be here until they trust me. I’m a trustworthy person. They all seem a little paranoid, but I can’t blame them for that. If I need their trust to be free then I had better start earning it. I turn back to Torin who is still watching me closely. I feel like maybe he’s waiting for me to freak out or try to escape.

“You promise I’ll be safe here?” I demand. He gives a slow nod.

“This spell you want her to cast, can it be removed eventually?” I ask. He blinks again. I think I’ve confused him.

“Yes. But if you think you’ll be able to break it and run away you’ll be disappointed. The only person who can break the spell is the one who casts it. Laura will never break that spell against her will. You aren’t powerful enough to force her.” His tone is a warning. But I actually appreciate it. He’s protective of his people, that’s sweet.

“Don’t be silly. I’m not going to force her to do anything. I just wanted to make sure it wasn’t permanent. Alright, you can go ahead and cast the spell. Do you need me to do anything?” I ask Laura. She looks at me like I’m crazy.

“You... You’re just going to... To let me cast it?” She asks, confused and I nod.

“Yep.” I agree easily.

“But... Aren’t you scared or angry? Don’t you want to escape? We’re essentially trapping you when you haven’t done anything wrong!” She reminds me. She seems more disturbed by the idea than I am. I smile at her, trying to reassure her.

“I’m not angry. Maybe a little scared but who wouldn’t be? I understand that you all have to protect yourselves. You’re only in this situation because you helped me. Trapped is better than being dead, and if the spell isn’t permanent then I figure all I have to do is teach you all to trust me and you’ll remove it all on your own. I’m a trustworthy person you know. I’ve decided the first step to earning everyone’s trust is to do what makes you all comfortable. If that means staying here then so be it.” I explain.

All three of them stare at me. Even Torin’s poker face seems to have slipped just the tiniest bit. He looks... Confused. Like he’s looking at something implausible, like a duck on roller skates. It’s kind of adorable how baffled he is. He quickly returns to his stoic expression and I have to fight the urge to giggle. I might be a little hysterical at this point. I don’t know.

“Laura, cast the binding spell on Miss Akari.” he orders for the second time.

“Yes sir. Right away.” She agrees. This time, Laura doesn’t seem nearly as reluctant. I can still see that she feels bad about it, but apparently my compliance has removed the underlying guilt that was eating at her. I’m glad. I don’t want her to feel bad about keeping her friends safe. She sighs.

“Carina, give me your hand please.” Laura requests. I hold it out compliantly. I give her my left hand since my right wrist is all scratched and bandaged up. This might be the dumbest thing I’ve ever done. They’re right, I probably should be trying to run away, to escape them. But I’d have no chance on my own.

Besides, apparently there’s a whole lot of things I didn’t know about. Monsters and magic for starters. I want to know more if only because it gives me a better chance at surviving. I have no idea why that monster was after me, but if Torin was capable of chasing him away then I’m inclined to stick close to him. Laura turns my hand over so the inside of my wrist is facing up, then grips my wrist tightly.

“Sorry about this.” She apologises before she closes her eyes and starts mouthing something. Like she’s trying to remember something and is going over it in her head. My wrist starts to feel warm. Is that because of her grip or because something is happening? I might have agreed to this, but that doesn’t mean I’m not nervous about it. My wrist isn’t just warm now, it’s hot. I sort of want to tug it away. Okay, now it’s burning. I instinctively go to pull back but Torin darts forward and grabs my arm, holding it in place.

“Not yet. A little longer.” He insists. My eyes are watering and I’m biting my lip but I nod. He doesn’t let go of my arm. What feels like an hour later but was probably only a few seconds, Laura opens her eyes and lets go of my wrist.

“It’s done.” She makes eye contact with me.

“You’re limited to the building. If you cross so much as a finger out the door you’ll regret it.” She warns. It should be threatening, but I don’t think she means it that way, I think she really is warning me.

“What happens if I do? I’m not going to. I just want to know.” I ask.

“The burning pain you felt in your wrist just now? That’s what you’ll feel when you leave this place.” She explains. A thought occurs to me. I really should have asked more questions before agreeing to this.

“What if someone else were to take me out of the place? Is it my leaving that triggers it or my choosing to leave?” I continue. Laura frowns.

“I suggest you don’t let anyone take you out of here. The pain would be... Well, it could kill you.” She admits and I shudder. Magic is scary as hell.

I want to check my wrist, I’m pretty sure I’ll have a burn mark or something. Except I can’t actually look at it because Torin is still holding my arm. I clear my

throat as I tug on it a little. He quickly releases me and takes three whole steps back. Okay, that was kind of excessive. Still, at least I can check my wrist now. I am surprised to see that it isn't red or irritated at all. However there is a mark. It doesn't look like an injury though, more like a scar, or one of those white tattoos. It looks sort of like a bunch of interlocking triangles that are forming a diamond shape. It's kind of pretty although I wasn't expecting the new body art. All of a sudden Laura sways in place. I automatically step forward and steady her.

"Woah, are you alright?" I ask, concerned. She gives me a weak smile.

"I'm alright. Just really tired. That was a big spell." She assures me. In that moment her knees buckle and she collapses forward onto me. I catch her as best I can, but she's bigger than me and I'm struggling.

"Uh... guys? A little help here?"

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