

A Lesson in Magic

Lesson 6- Be kind to others, especially those who might be different from you.

I think back to when I was a kid. I had this neighbour. He was big and scary, tattoos all over him and he rode around on a super noisy motorbike. I was terrified of him, so much so that I would cross the street to avoid him. He knew it too. Then one day when I was about thirteen, I was stuck outside the house in the rain. I was freezing and my asthma was starting to play up. He brought me inside, made me a cup of tea and planted me in front of the heater until my brother got home with the keys to let us in.

My dad however... He was handsome and charming, the kind of person that you meet and are immediately drawn to. He was also the one who locked me outside in the rain.

“I don’t really think that you being a demon particularly changes anything.” I announce. Torin raises an eyebrow. This might be the most emotive I’ve seen him so far.

“How so?” He asks.

“Well... Look at it this way. That guy who was chasing me on the street, he was bigger than me, and stronger. I had no chance at fighting him off. But if he was human? Well he would still be bigger and stronger than me. I still probably couldn’t fight him off. So what difference does it make? Sure, a monster like him could kill me, but so could a human. So could a particularly well motivated duck. I guess it’s just going to be a little harder now to be sure about just how dangerous people are, particularly if they can disguise themselves the way you said. It’s how people act that makes them dangerous, not what they happen to be.” I conclude.

All three of them are staring at me now. Torin is blinking again and Kyle is watching me with a furrowed brow. Are THEY scared of Torin? Why? And if they’re so scared, why are they even here? Torin is the one to break the awkward silence.

“To answer your earlier question, I can do both. I can cloak myself with magic to hide in the shadows, but as you can see, I also have a second form.” He explains, gesturing to himself.

“Huh, cool.” Is all I respond with. I kind of want to see what he looks like in his demon form again. I was kind of out of it the first time and it’s annoying me that my mental picture of it is a little fuzzy. But I don’t think I can ask to see that.

Partially because it seems impolite somehow, and partially because Laura and Kyle already look freaked out enough as it is. There’s no need to break them further. I’m going to be stuck here for at least the night, probably a lot longer than that. There’s no need to rush.

We sit there awkwardly for a moment. That’s not going to work for me at all. I’m okay right now because I haven’t stopped to think. I’m pretty sure I’m due a meltdown a bit later, but right now I just want to keep busy, or distracted at the very least.

“So... What now?” I ask with forced cheer. Everyone is quiet so Laura takes over. Clearly she’s the extrovert of the group.

“Well, since you’re stuck here now there’s no harm in giving you a bit of a crash course in the supernatural. Right?” She glances over to Torin who gives a single nod. Permission given, she continues her explanation.

“For starters, you’ve probably guessed that I am a witch. I channel and use magic through spells and potions. There is some practice needed but mostly witch magic is based on intent and emotion. A witches’ power is limited by how much magic they are able to channel.” She concludes.

“Laura here is too modest to admit it, but she is a very powerful witch.” Kyle brags on her behalf. Laura blushes again and ducks her head.

“Not THAT powerful, not compared to some. But I do alright.” She mutters, apparently unable to meet the shorter man’s eye. Now THAT’S interesting. I wonder if there’s something between the two of them. There’s a good distance between them, but for such a gruff guy he’s fast to compliment her.

“What about you then? Do you have magic too?” I ask the grumpy cook. He shakes his head adamantly.

“No. I’m a dwarf. We don’t meddle with all that magic nonsense.” He grumbles. I raise an eyebrow as I look over his clean shaven face. Sure he’s short, and his height makes sense, but I always thought dwarves were meant to have beards, they always do in the stories. And are they supposed to be so... round?

“A dwarf, really? Why don’t you have a beard?” I ask bluntly with a good natured grin. Kyle rolls his eyes.

“Only old fashioned morons over having a beard. I am a modern dwarf, I don’t bother with that nonsense. They’ve been out of fashion for decades. Besides, beards get in the way when I’m cooking.” He grumbles and I can’t help but snigger. He SAYS he doesn’t like beards, but for him to know how inconvenient they are he must have had one at some point, right? A glance at Laura shows that she’s hiding a smile too. I KNEW it.

“Hey if dwarves don’t use magic, what makes you supernatural? Doesn’t it just make you... I don’t know... Short?” I ask. Kyle blusters and gasps at me in horror.

“SHORT? I’ll have you know I’m quite tall for a dwarf. And I’ll have you know that dwarves have the best supernatural abilities of all. WE don’t meddle with magic and it doesn’t meddle with us. Not at all. Spells just slide right off of us.” He brags.

“Bounce off their thick skin is more like it.” Laura grumbles and I repress the urge to giggle. The two of them really are cute. It seems like Kyle has a thing for Laura. I’m not sure if she likes him or not though. At least if I’m stuck here I can enjoy the free drama. Still, I should try to learn more about why I ended up here in the first place. I’m not here to have fun.

“What about that guy who chased me? What was he?” I ask. Laura shakes her head.

“I didn’t see him. Torin chased him away before I made it outside.” She answers.

“Oh. Torin, did you get a good look at him?” I didn’t notice until now, but he’s slowly removed himself from the conversation and has retreated to stand by the door. I don’t think he’s particularly shy or anything, he speaks to me well enough it’s more like he’s trying to be considerate. The other two clearly aren’t comfortable around him so he isn’t forcing his presence or inserting himself into the conversation. Well, I want to talk to him at least, so I’ll drag him into the conversation myself.

“I did see him. I am not positive what he was. Some kind of wolfman I suspect. He did not appear capable of shifting into a full wolf like a shifter would, but there is a full moon tonight, so it is possible that he is one of the types who is cursed to transform in some way. It is unlikely that someone would be cursed like that without first committing some great offence, usually against a witch. Curses are generally fueled by emotions of revenge, anger and heartbreak. They are intended

to give people what they deserve, or make them into more of what they already are.” He says firmly.

“So if that guy was cursed to be a monster it’s because someone already considered him to be one? That makes a dreadful amount of sense.” I conclude with a sigh. It doesn’t sound all that good for me either.

My thoughts are interrupted by a banging sound coming from down the hall where I can hear the music and voices. Actually, they have gotten a lot louder while we’ve been sitting here. Kyle glances towards the sound with a horrified look.

“We’re supposed to be working!” He blurts out.

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