

A STUDY IN HAPHAZARD MAGIC

1.03 | EVERYONE'S ON STRINGS

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FADE IN:

INT. NOTABLE NOVELS - DAY

ASHER stands by the shelves. He loads them with new books from a box held against his side.

ASHER
I didn't even know this place
sold popular fiction. I thought
it was all old collectors items.

He looks over to MILES who is opening another box of books on the counter.

MILES
Those 'old collectors items' are
what make my store unique.
Though, yes, most day to day
business consists of selling
these-

He pulls a book out of the box, looks at the cover.

MILES (CONT'D)
-vampire romance novels.

He turns the book to look at the back.

MILES (CONT'D)
I stand corrected. This one is
about a half-vampire half-angel.

Asher snorts, amused, and goes back to stacking shelves.

ASHER
So... why am I here helping you
run your business while the
others are working on their
magic?

MILES
Why do you think?

ASHER
Uh, they need more practice? You
hate me in particular? I don't
know. Why does everything have to
be a riddle with you?

MILES
Asher, do me a favour. Take three
large steps back then put the box
down.

Asher shoots Miles a skeptical look but does as instructed.

(CONTINUED)

ASHER
Okay, now what?

MILES
Catch.

Miles tosses the book in his hands at Asher. He catches it, just.

MILES (CONT'D)
Now put the book on the shelf
without moving.

ASHER
Without- How? Hmm.

Asher takes a moment, studying the distance. He tries leaning forward, arm outstretched, but he's nowhere near the shelf.

ASHER (CONT'D)
Are you going to hate me even
more if I throw the book at the
shelf?

Miles' expression clearly reads *'what do you think?'*.

ASHER (CONT'D)
O-kay, no throwing then.

Asher spends another few seconds trying to figure out what to do. He gives up with a sigh and turns to Miles.

ASHER (CONT'D)
You've stumped me. How am I
supposed to get this book to the
shelf without moving or throwing
it?

MILES
Tell me Asher, what have I been
teaching you for the last month
or so?

Asher slumps. The solution is obvious now.

ASHER
I was supposed to use magic.
(beat)
But we haven't gone over anything
like this.

MILES
Do you think that would have
stopped Evie, or Link, even?

ASHER

Well, no, not really.

MILES

Do you wonder why magic comes so naturally to Evie? Why Link is casting perfect spells with exactly the same study as you while you can't? It's not because they're any better at this than you. This isn't about them, it's all about what's in your head.

Miles taps the side of his own head for emphasis.

MILES (CONT'D)

What is it you're studying again?

ASHER

Computer programming and mathematics.

MILES

And what job are you working right now?

ASHER

Besides stacking your shelves? IT support line.

MILES

Can you see the trend here?

ASHER

Yeah, obviously, but I don't see what that has to do with my ability to perform magic.

MILES

And that's where you're wrong. It has everything to do with it.

(beat)

Everything you do is structured, logical. Your job, your studies, it's all facts and science. Everything can fit perfectly into their categories and those categories link together in a way that makes sense to you. Whether you realise it or not you're trying to apply these same principles to magic. Only magic isn't something quantifiable, measurable. You can't explain it with science! At least, not any science we're able to do in this day and age.

(CONTINUED)

ASHER

So what do I do?

MILES

You learn to think outside the box, and then some. Don't think about *why*, just *do*.

ASHER

My whole life revolves around 'why' and 'how'. That's going to be easier said than done.

MILES

And what, pray tell, made you think magic was going to be easy?

With a flick of his wrist Miles sends the box on the counter flying towards Asher. He catches it against his stomach with a grunt.

MILES (CONT'D)

Now back to work. These books aren't going to arrange themselves. Not without a little magical help, anyway.

INT. CLOTHING BUILDING - GROUND FLOOR - DAY

LINK sits on an old but comfortable looking couch that has been pushed up against one of the walls. He fiddles with an expensive looking CAMERA.

Sitting in front of him on the floor is EVIE. She is working her way through a series of stretches.

EVIE

So, uh, what's with the camera?

LINK

Oh, I'm studying photography.

EVIE

I thought you were a personal trainer?

LINK

I am, but I'm completing a photography course at the moment too. Personal training is great, but it's not really a passion, you know?

Evie stretches her legs out in front of her and reaches for her toes.

(CONTINUED)

EVIE

Oh yeah, I know. My parents weren't too happy when they found out my passion was permanent body art.

Link chuckles. Evie stands and arches her back in a stretch.

EVIE (CONT'D)

Anyway, how's the magic coming along?

LINK

Good! Better with your help.
(beat)
You?

EVIE

Excellent. I've been experimenting. Look at this.

She shoots him a wicked grin and holds a hand out in front herself.

A small purple flame suddenly bursts to existence on her palm.

She lets it flicker for a moment, growing a bit bigger, before a purple tinged transparent sphere begins to form around it.

LINK

How did you learn to do that?

EVIE

It's basically our defensive spell, just sustained as a bubble. I'm figuring out magic is more of a what *can't* you do thing than a what *can* you do thing.

LINK

That actually makes a whole lot of sense. Why the bubble though?

EVIE

The protective shield stops the fire from spreading and also allows me to do this...

Evie drops her hand and steps back. The fire remains floating in its protective bubble. She smiles, bright and enthusiastic.

CLICK- the sound of a camera shutter.

(CONTINUED)

Evie's smile is replaced with an annoyed frown as she turns to Link. He lowers the camera, a sheepish smile on his face.

LINK
For the memories...?

Evie lets up on her glare, mostly.

EVIE
Okay Mr. Snap Happy, let's do
some actual practice, huh?

She gives his foot a gentle kick to get him moving and heads off to the center of the room.

Link quickly puts his camera away and jumps up to follow.

INT. ASHER & MEREDITH'S APARTMENT - LIVING AREA - NIGHT

MEREDITH sits on the couch in front of the quietly playing TV. On the coffee table in front of her are two piles of paper.

Meredith herself has one of the papers in her lap, making notes in a green pen as she reads through.

It's with a heavy sigh that Asher appears, flopping on the couch next to his girlfriend.

MEREDITH
Busy day?

ASHER
Something like that. Probably
just need to manage my time
better.
(beat)
Are those essays?

Meredith hums in confirmation.

ASHER (CONT'D)
How are they doing?

Meredith writes a score on the bottom of the paper, circles it, and places it onto the taller pile.

MEREDITH
Better than they were.

ASHER
That's because they have a good
teacher.

(CONTINUED)

MEREDITH

They do, don't they?

She smiles and looks to Asher. Her smile drops slightly when she notices his ponderous expression.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

Hey, what's up?

ASHER

Just trying to decide if I still want to do this magic thing.

MEREDITH

The magic thing that you were so desperate to master that you didn't tell me about it for a month?

ASHER

I'm uh, not going to live that one down, am I?

Meredith's smile is playful.

MEREDITH

Not any time soon. But seriously, why the second guessing now?

ASHER

It's hard. Harder than I thought and it's amazing at the same time but... I don't know.

Meredith pulls her legs up onto the couch and turns to face Asher properly.

MEREDITH

Pros and cons. What do you want to start with?

ASHER

I don't know. Um, cons.

MEREDITH

Okay, start listing.

As Asher goes through the points, Meredith keeps track on her fingers.

ASHER

It takes up a lot of time. It's dangerous-

MEREDITH

I didn't think magic was that dangerous.

ASHER

Me neither, but lots of injuries if you're not careful. Um, I'm not very good at it...

MEREDITH

So that's our negatives, now the positives.

ASHER

Pros are...

(he smiles)

...it's fun, I mean, I enjoy it even if I'm not good. Though Miles, the guy who teaches us, thinks I could be really good.

(beat; enthusiastic)

The people. The people I'm learning with are nice. And it's a challenge, I'm learning a lot from it. Not just magic either, just, learning about myself too I guess. New discoveries all around.

He pauses, thinking back on his last few word.

ASHER (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Huh, new discoveries...

Meredith holds up both her hands, three fingers raised on each.

MEREDITH

And we're tied.

ASHER

That didn't help much then.

Meredith reaches for a new essay.

MEREDITH

I don't know about that. I think I already know which way you're going to go.

ASHER

You do?

Meredith just shoots him a knowing smile.

INT. CLOTHING BUILDING - GROUND FLOOR - EVENING

In Asher's hand is a strong, vibrant green flame.

He looks to Miles, waiting.

MILES

Good.

(quieter; to Asher)
Looks like someone is starting to
break down some mental walls.

Asher can't help a small smile.

ASHER

I just had to re-route my thought
process.

MILES

It seems to be working.

ASHER

Pretty impressive, isn't it?

MILES

Not as much as you might think.

Asher just snorts a half laugh.

MILES (CONT'D)

(loudly)
Alright. Students, gather.

Link and Evie make their way over to where Miles and Asher stand.

MILES (CONT'D)

Now that we've made some progress
on how to use magic today, I
think it's about time I held up
my end of the bargain we made.
Before I do though, I want to
make something abundantly clear.

Miles takes the time to make eye contact with each of his students in turn.

MILES (CONT'D)

From here on out there is no
going back. Evelyn, you were
correct in thinking there was
motive behind why I was teaching
you magic but until now that
hasn't mattered. If you so choose
you can leave right now, walk out
that door and owe me nothing.

Miles waves his arm at the door in emphasis.

(CONTINUED)

MILES (CONT'D)

But if you stay it's important to understand this: knowledge is a powerful thing, and once you know something there's no easy way of un-knowing it. There are serious risks in moving forward, but there are also great gains.

(beat)

Well, anyone leaving?

Evie, Link, and Asher share glances but none of them move.

Miles grins.

MILES (CONT'D)

Wonderful. Any questions you may have, any question, you can ask now.

Evie doesn't miss a beat.

EVIE

What's the motive behind plucking us off the street and teaching us magic?

MILES

I work for a group known as the Guild of Sorcery. They've existed for hundreds of years working to research and experiment with magic and, of course, fight against people who use magic for evil.

(beat)

Or at least they used to.

LINK

What do you mean?

MILES

The Guild has good intentions but that's not enough. The leaders have grown complacent in their positions of power and forget that you can't fight dark sorcerers from a comfortable seat in your protective headquarters.

EVIE

I'm sensing you and this Guild of Sorcery aren't on the best of terms, so why are you working for them?

(CONTINUED)

MILES

Because they finally pulled their finger out. Way too late in the game, but better late than never. What it boils down to, however, is we need new sorcerers and sorceresses to help us combat a new threat. And that, my dearest Evelyn, is why I pulled you off the street to teach you magic.

Miles observes as Evie, Link, and Asher take in the new information but none of them look to be regretting their decision to stay.

ASHER

What exactly do you mean by evil sorcerers?

MILES

I'm glad you asked, Asher, because our next lesson is going to involve some field work.

(beat)

I think it's about time for you to learn about the type of scum we're up against.

On Miles' satisfied smirk-

BLACKOUT.

END OF EPISODE