

It's Just Business

This was my favourite part.

The pentagram spewed forth billowing trails of smoke, and from them I rose, a shadow in the centre of the room, drawing in the light, save for two yellow, staring eyes.

What's the point of being invoked if you can't take a bit of artistic license? Get 'em scared, that's the way to do it.

The magician stood across the room from me, arms crossed and tapping one finger in time with an imaginary beat. I suppose my form was a little blasé. This was clearly a magician of some experience. It would take something a little creative to get under his skin!

I cracked my metaphorical knuckles. Time for something fun! The prince of darkness was nothing if not resourceful.

Glowing eyes became twin spotlights, focussed on my shadowy form, which got fuzzier and fuzzier until it was a cascading curtain of smoke. With a delicate hand, I reached out, sliding away the curtain and revealing myself.

I could see instantly I was having some effect. His jaw was dropping as the smoke cleared. Maybe it was the horns, or the spear tipped tail thrashing against the floorboards. Much more likely it was the way the almost transparent material hugged my new forms shapely curves. He was only human, after all.

Revealing, enticing, but just modest enough to be elegant. Now this was a form to beguile hapless magicians with. After a pause positively dripping with tension, I spoke.

"What is it you desire, my *lord*?"

The voice was, if I may say so myself, like audible chocolate. So smooth and refined, it reached in through the magicians slightly oversized ears and befuddled his brain. Or so I thought.

"I have cast the proper incantations, slave," the magician said, simply. "Your will is mine."

He was a little more focussed than most, I'll give him that. Not even my tail, coiling slowly up my thigh, gave him pause.

"You're no fun!" my beguiling form crossed her arms and gave a small pout. "Why don't we stop with all that master/slave stuff?"

I nearly materialised a light bulb above my head as I had a thought.

"Unless that's your thing. I can do all sorts of tricks..."

A pair of handcuffs materialised on my wrists, pulling my arms behind my back and pushing my chest forward in a certain way, just enough to...

“Stop that!” the magician was not pleased.

“Come on sailor, live a little,” my form spoke again, her negligee slowly receding into nothing. “I bet you’ve got some deep, dark little fantasy trapped in there somewhere...”

See the problem is, I’m kind. I give things out for free. But if I can trick you, if you commit a deadly sin, your eternal soul is mine to do with as I please. They’re quite good on toast.

“I wish to make a deal, you loathsome creature!”

“Oh,” the becoming young lady’s attire suddenly grew back into place, turning into a nice, tight fitting suit. “Business then.”

I whipped a quill and scroll out from behind my ear.

“You know, I bet you’ve got a secretary you fancy,” I said, pretending to scrawl on the parchment. “Someone blonde...”

My hair changed.

“Petite...”

I lost about five inches.

“Perhaps a little chubby, but with curves in *all* the right places...”

You get the idea.

The magician, however, appeared not to. He simply watched as I bulged at the chest, barely even blinking as buttons popped off my blouse. I furrowed my brow, shrinking again and letting the suit fall to the ground. Lust was normally so easy!

“Isn’t there anything you want?” I was upside down now, gently caressing every inch of myself with my tail.

“Stop that and pay attention!” he shouted. “I demand you take me seriously.”

Aha! Finally, something to work with.

“What’s wrong? Afraid all your magician friends won’t believe that you’re powerful? What kind of deal do you want? Power, riches, status? We’ve already ruled out lust...”

“I need you to observe someone for me.”

“Ooh,” I spun right way up again. “Now that is naughty. Jealousy!”

A ruler appeared in my hand and a particularly revealing teachers outfit on my body.

"I think perhaps a punishment is in order," I straightened my glasses and swished the ruler through the air. "So do you want me to watch everything, or are you just after shower-cam."

"I don't know who they are yet."

Nearly got him with the lust again...

"So you want someone found then?"

"Yes!"

"What soort of person?" the teachers outfit had slowly metamorphosed into a policewoman's uniform. "I could book you for that, intrusion of privacy."

The magician twitched.

"I need you to find me my soul mate."

Oh!

"Oh!" I moaned, beginning to cry. "You don't want me!? Aren't I pretty enough?"

The tears were so intense that I began to melt, turning from a beautiful woman into a puddle of pinkish goo.

"I don't want you!"

"But you're willing to make a deal with me."

"Well," the magician hesitated. "I've tried everything else I can think of."

"So you want to see your true love?"

This was a pretty common question. I had the perfect answer for him.

"Yes, please!"

"Well look who's being so courteous! That's better..."

"Just tell me!"

"So much for that..."

I grinned, twiddling my fingers.

"Show me the love of my life!"

I gave him a smarmy wink and disappeared, clothes first, in a cloud of smoke.

As the smoke cleared, he found himself looking into a mirror.

After a few moments, he spoke again.

“And I’ll see them in this mirror?”

Man, he was *not* getting it! So much for pride. Still, he had to have some weakness. As I’m sure I told you, if you invoke me you get what you want. If I accidentally tempt you to sin and thus relinquish your soul to me in the process, all the better.

I love moral souls. So much meatier than the usual gamblers and lawyers.

“Well it’s clearly difficult,” I said, my body drooping until only one foot remained airborne. “Why even bother?”

“I must find her!”

So much for sloth.

“Why do you need me to find her for you? Join a dating site, go down the pub.”

“I’ve tried dating. I can’t find the one.”

“Aha. Nasty breakup was it?” This time I was sure I was on to something.

“She just wasn’t the one.”

“Is that her,” I spotted a picture in a frame, perched atop his dresser.

Leaving personal pictures in view is a big no-no. I chided myself for taking so long to spot it. I morphed instantly, taking on this girlfriends form.

“So why did I break up with you?”

“We just weren’t compatible.”

“Sure, that’s what I want you to think. Really, it was another man.”

“There was no one else, she told me.”

“And you believed me!?” I laughed derisively. “My god, I’m glad I left you.”

A small tear appeared in the corner of his eye. Progress! I pushed my advantage. Wrath was another common clincher.

“Don’t you want to punish me?” I began to alter her features, making her look more and more demonic.

“No.”

What!?

“Are you sure? I’m the bitch who broke your heart!”

“We weren’t right for each other,” he was clearly fighting back tears.

Parry, repost, feint, and then, to jab home my argument.

"Wouldn't you prefer some ice cream?" I asked. "Something sweet to distract you."

He could barely speak for the tears, but he nodded tentatively.

"A whole lot of ice cream?"

Another nod.

"Thankyou." I gave a bow.

The deal was done. The room was filled with tubs of ice cream as I departed.

This guy was tough, but there's always something. That said, it's very rarely gluttony. That's not a weapon I've had to use for a long time.

* * *

He was a kind chap, at heart. I could taste it. It was a delicious soul, really, best I've had in ages.

Funny, he didn't taste like a magician at all. On a whim I glanced back at my calendar.

When did I win his soul?

Bugger!

October thirty bloody first. He probably wasn't even a magician! Some drunken kid in a costume who just broke up with his girlfriend. No wonder he fell apart so quickly!

I almost felt bad for him. I devour every magician I can on principle – the bastards never give me a moment's peace, always invoking me, slaughtering innocent goats, the usual stuff – but commoners are not my cup of tea. If they do something awful, sure, they're mine, but I pride myself on giving mortals a fair chance.

I'd given a few extra months, but today I was just feeling peckish.

It had been a couple of hours since I'd nicked this particular soul, and I could already feel a presence encroaching on my domain.

The Reaper gave me hell for that one.