

Unexpected Visit

By: A.X. Bueno

There's a loud knock at the door. Theo gets up off the couch to answer it

Theo: "Give me a minute, I'm coming. Oh! Hey Marsh, I didn't expect to see you today. What's up?"

Marsh: "Heya Theo. I thought I'd surprise ya with a magic lesson here at your home instead of mine for a change."

Theo: "That certainly is a surprise. Before you come in, give me a minute or two to clean up my house a little please?"

Marsh: "Sure. I can wait a little while you tidy up in there."

Theo sprints inside while the moon bear waits in his doorway. There's the sounds of some clangs, doors opening and closing, the sound of glass shattering and then the sound of some sweeping before the polar bear opens the wooden door again crouching a little to fit through it and gestures inside.

Marsh: "That was lightning fast cub. I heard a lotta noise too while you in here, everything good?"

Theo: "Yeah everything's fine. I just had a lot of stuff to store away before this place looked presentable. While I was doing that though one of my potion vials from my stas-, **stand**...stand broke and I was cleaning it up. Feel free to take a seat on the couch."

Marsh does, on the couch in the other bear's living room that's noticeably bigger than a typical one and also looks stronger than a regular one too. Theo continues to stand and looks slightly nervous before proceeding to ask a question.

Theo: "So what are you going to teach me today? Also you want something to drink? I've got iced tea, ginger ale and water."

Marsh: "I'll take some iced tea, thanks. As for what I'm gonna teach ya today. That depends on you? What do you want to learn today Mr. ...*Augustooo*?" Marsh says Theo's last name with a breathiness that both clashes and is accentuated by his southern accent simultaneously. It catches Theo off guard

Theo: “Since when do you use my last name? I mean not that I mind but I thought you called me cub though I prefer you call me Theo. Actually why do you call me cub, now that I think about it? It’s such a weird choice of nickname all things considered.”

Theo says while scratching his chin with a claw before sipping some ginger ale

Marsh: “What can I say you just remind me so much of my son but a little older that I just can’t help but call you cub, cub. I thought that I’d use yer last name this time though and mix it up a little, keep ya on yer toes.”

Theo nods in understanding at this

Theo: “That reminds me, you told me your son hasn’t lived with you until about 2 years ago. What happened?”

Marsh sighs heavily before taking a sip of his iced tea and then matting down the exposed black fur of his arm

Marsh: “It’s a long story. To keep it short I broke a big taboo of magic to try and do something for him when he didn’t want it and it made him mad at me and I don’t blame him for that. I made a mistake and broke a rule and that pushed him into the care of one of my brothers. He’s still technically a few years too young to be out on his own. Well in terms of our years anyway.”

Theo: “I see... was that taboo and rule about necromancy by any chance? Also sorry to hear that that happened between you and your son.”

Marsh almost choked on his drinks, coughing before swallowing some more iced tea and rubbing down his ruffled fur and sleeves. He puts the drink down on the table in the middle of the living room.

Marsh: *Gasp* “How in the fresh hell did you deduce that?!”

Theo: “That’s just a common thing I’ve noticed when it comes to the one rule you’re not supposed to break with magic. I just took an educated guess that’s what it was and I seem to be right. If it wasn’t that I would have guessed love next”

Marsh: “Yea. Yeah you were right the first time, ‘at was a pretty good guess. Do you mind if we go back to talking about your training though. I don’t really like talking ‘bout what happened then.”

Marsh looks down slightly ashamed and

Theo looks at his footpaws for a second before a look of realization comes to his muzzle.

Theo: “Yeah, I get that. I kind of don’t like talking about those meetings I’ve had with that Cunning Chimera, they’re pretty personal.”

Marsh: “I understand. You’ll tell me that story of your last encounter with them someday though won’tcha cub?”

Theo: “Sure, some other time and maybe then you can tell me about your story with your son and all.”

Marsh: “I’ll think about it.”

Theo: “You know, speaking of that Sly Dreams Seller do you think you could teach me how to make portals to other universes like him?”

Marsh starts laughing, the moon bear’s black furred belly jiggling under his white sleeveless shirt from how hard he's doing it.

Marsh: “**Ahahahaha!** Whew, ahaha...no.”

Theo: “**What? Why notttt?!**” Theo whines

Marsh: “Well for starters I don’t know that kind of magic. Second-”

Theo: “Don’t know that kind of magic?! But I’ve seen you make portals to other dimensions and pull stuff from them. What gives?!”

Theo interrupts to say. Marsh simply clears his throat before sighing and starting over.

Marsh: “As I was saying, I don’t know **that kind** of magic. The magic I use is a less complicated one way portal spell and can only draw things here. A two way portal spell that enables proper travel between realms of existence or universes requires a level of power that I don’t have right now and secondly that’s a power that you also don’t have yet as far as my nose, eyes and experience can tell me. Thirdly, why do you even want to learn that spell anyway? What good would you gain from trying to learn dat Chimera’s weird and pretty old magics?”

Theo: “I need to learn his magics so I can beat him when the time comes. I’ve got to!”

Marsh: "Beat him? Is he planning to come back yet again for you?"

Theo: "Yes! And when he does I need to be ready so I can finally make him give me the answer of why he wanted to make me this way!"

There's desperation in the polar bear's voice now

Marsh: "Trust me on this Theo, whatever answer he can give you won't be satisfying or give you peace. That Chimera is always doing his best to make things work for him by being tricky and cryptic. It's unlikely any answer he gives ya isn't just meant to make you his own means to an end. 'sides you don't need him to give yerself purpose. Also... you've seriously got to tell me about that second encounter you had with that guy."

Theo: You're right and one of these days I really will...thanks Marsh. I'd still like to know someday but I can take it slower in prepping for that next confrontation and worry about it some other time. In the meantime maybe you could help me practice with making ice weapons and walls. I've gotten good at making ice itself, mini blizzards and have made pretty good progress with shrinking and growing myself and other things but I've been struggling with forming actual things out of the ice like say ice daggers or something."

Marsh: "Hmm I see. I use more fire magic but it's the same principle so I'm pretty sure I can teach you, I mean check this out."

Marsh waves his now green glowing paws apart from each other in a motion resembling a rainbow creating a veil of green fire in the air before then using his paws to craft the shape of a sword while they now glow blue as does the fire. He rubs his padded paws together and pulls the sword from the fiery veil he made, showing off it's usability with a few thrusts in the air which ruffles the already messy fur on his beefy arms. The magic moon bear almost knocks down the tv remote on the other bear's living room changing Theo's look of awe to one of worry before Marsh stops demonstrating what his sword of flame can do.

Theo: "That's impressive and everything but ummm maybe we could practice outside in the backyard. Let me just put these cups in the sink."

Theo grabs Marsh's cup off the table which the older bear put down when he finished drinking before then grabbing his own cup from another part of the table. That is until Marsh stops him by waving a black paw which makes the polar bear stop before he can really move more than a few inches towards the kitchen.

Marsh: “Don’t worry about it man. I’ve got this.”

Marsh raises his hands again, this time only his fingers glow as he mutters a word and raises his index finger before making it point forward and this makes the dishes move before he snaps another finger and the door to the cabinet with the dishes in it opens up. At this Theo notices something and takes a moment to sniff the air smelling a mix of pine tree, the smoke from fireworks and something he can’t quite make out but in a way it’s familiar, almost like an old friend whose name you can’t quite remember despite it being on the tip of your tongue. Two smells that while mixing are still distinct and separate enough to be noticed individually. Marsh takes note of Theo sniffing the air and catching a whiff of his magic’s smell and he smiles with pride as the door for the dish cabinet is closed with his finger as the dishes the bear magically cleaned and put away are left in there now.

Marsh: “Ah don’t believe it. You can smell magic now?! That’s marvelous and kinda impressive since ‘at skill usually takes a year or three to be picked up by people doing and practicing magic like we are.”

Theo:”Well I suppose potion making is a type of magic, hehe. Really though it’s only a faint smell I got and it’s already fading since your hands stopped glowing.”

Marsh rubs his claw against his chin before his smile returns.

Marsh: “That just means it’s a skill in it’s infancy, dat yer still developin’. Which is okay because of a secret that most don’t know. Do you want to?”

Theo: “Want to what?”

Marsh:”Oh come on! **Know the secret!** Do you want to know the secret?”

Theo slaps the side of his spotted muzzle with the black palm of his paw in annoyance at himself before answering.

Theo: “**Rightttt**, right. Yeah of course I do.”

Marsh leans in close to the polar bear, right next to his ear solely for dramatic effect before he tells it.

Marsh: “So the thing is your skills will only get better as you get older and I’m not even talking about just practice though that does help plenty. A person’s magic gets naturally stronger the older they get, that’s why all the best mages are ancient. A lot of time for age to boost their abilities.”

Theo: “Really. That’s amazing! Maybe I will be stronger than that Chimera, with some more practice and more time.”

The sorcerer bear merely chuckles at this, the bravado of determined youth but also that he’s happy that he reinvigorated his pupil’s energy

Marsh: “We shall see. Now watta ya say we go out and start practicing huh? We’re burning through the afternoon just standing here.”

Theo: “Sure and after we’re done for the day I can make us both some food.”

Marsh: “Sounds great buddy. Let’s head outside.”

Theo and Marsh walk out the back door with Marsh going first. They stay out in Theo’s backyard for hours with Theo practicing and improving his magic and Marsh showing off a little with his own magic. Theo learns how to make ice arrows, ice arrows and gains more of a mastery over making ice walls. He then shows Marsh the extent to which he can shrink and grow right now before they finally go back inside where the polar bear makes a rich Beef Stroganoff. It is delicious and they both enjoy it as a satisfying end to their day together.

Marsh: “Mmmm, that was scrumptious! Thanks for the dinner, cub. See you Friday?”

Theo: “You know it! I’ll see you, same time as usual at your place or maybe a little later. Shadow Magic’s Grove still isn’t exactly easy to navigate for me. Heh.”

Marsh: “Don’t sweat it, that place can be a real maze at times. So long as you get there that’s all that matters.”

Marsh and Theo shake hands but before either can let go a look of remembrance comes to Marsh’s face.

Marsh: “Ohhh before I forget can I ask you something?”

Theo: “Sure you can. Ask away.”

Marsh: “So… uhgg where do you get your furniture from? I’ve been meaning to replace some of mine and yours looked pretty nice and felt more comfortable for a beastman of my size y’know.”

Theo: “Yeah I get that. I buy from a specific store because of how everything there is custom made for large beastmen and there’s stuff for smaller beastmen too but I mean look at us. We’re two large bears but anyway I get it all from Brightsun & Shade’s Beastmen Specialty Store.”

Marsh: “Brightsun and Shade’s Beastmen Specialty Store? That’s the name of it?”

Theo: “Yeah.”

Marsh: “Sweet, I’ll look into them when I get home. Thanks cub.”

Marsh reaches out his hand again for what Theo thinks is another handshake but instead turns into a hug. While in the embrace of Marsh’s black furred meaty arms and chest with it’s white furred mark Theo can’t help but purr a short deep purr as polar bears can do. Marsh detects it somewhat.

Marsh: “What was that?”

Theo: “Uhhh I don’t know what you’re talking about, haha.”

Theo laughs nervously hoping that Marsh believes him.

Theo: “Anywho I’ll catch you later Marsh.”

Marsh: “...Okkkk then. See ya later Theo.”

Marsh walks off on his way to the teleport gate that’ll take him back home and Theo retreats back into his own home.