

The city of Falksdale was a grand hub of culture and prestige. Its many ports shipped countless goods across the globe, and many smart commonfolk had made it big offering their services or products to the many passersby they came across. Above the city, perched on a hill overlooking the golden sanctuary, was Buntly Manor. The Buntlys were one of the few founding families of the city. They had amassed a massive fortune through the various businesses they had helped found over the many years, which they used to craft a manor fitting of their regal lineage.

The large mansion was painted a bright crimson color, and its roof was covered in brass plated tiles. A large courtyard decorated with flowers, shrubs, trees, and fountains laid before the large abode. A tall brick wall blocked off the estate from the outside, with a large golden gate being the only entrance. The Manor was truly a testament to beauty and wealth, and none would argue that the Buntlys weren't one of the best examples of the success that could come to those who made their lives in Falksdale.

However, inside the manor, it was a different story. Smoke filled the halls as the many maids that cared for the manor rushed to and fro, desperately trying to put out the blaze that had consumed the kitchen. They rushed back and forth, grabbing buckets, mugs, pots, and anything else that could carry water to put out the raging fire. In the middle of the chaos, Lord Buntly XIII commanded their efforts. He wore a bright red suit, with golden shoulderpads and cuffs. On his chest, many badges were stitched on, each representing one of the businesses his family had created. Over his heart, a large emblem featuring a Peacock was laid: his family's crest. He had short, well-groomed hair and a tiny handlebar mustache. His grey eyes had a gaze of confidence and pride. He was the sheer image of an aristocrat, and he embraced it proudly.

"Don't daddle! We musn't let this blaze spread to the rest of the manor! Imagine the cost of repairing it all!" he barked. True to his family's reputation, even in times of crisis, money was always on the mind.

"We are trying, sir!" one of the maids called out, as she dumped a pail of water into the inferno. "The blaze is too great! We will never be able to put it out like this!"

"Fine!" Lord Buntly said rather annoyed. "Someone go and get the aquarius rune from my chambers! That should do the job!"

The maid nodded and quickly ran off to grab the trinket. Lord Buntly let out a sigh. He didn't want to use the rune the Regigriff Magic Guild gave to him. They had given it to him for his continued support of their efforts to power the city. It was the start of a partnership with the guild that Lord Buntly didn't want to jeopardize.

The maid returned, holding the blue rock in her hands. It was smooth, like it had been taken straight out from a flowing river. A strange symbol made of many curving lines had been

carved into it. The stone gave off a cool aura, like the brisk breeze one might feel when out at the ports. Lord Buntly grabbed the rune and held it in front of him. He aimed it at the doorway leading to the kitchen. The blaze had been growing, and now consumed its entirety. A large wall of fire was all that could be seen inside. Gripping the rune with all his might, he chanted the spell and activated the magic. The rune dissolved, turning into water and jetting out from Lord Buntly's hand. The stream swirled around and made its way into the kitchen. It gathered in the center of the inferno as a giant sphere of water, and then exploded out, dousing the room and putting out the blaze in an instant. Smoke fumed out of the doorway, as everyone let out a sigh of relief. However, the calm only lasted a moment as Lord Buntly quickly turned around and let out a furious call.

"Madeline von Lace! Come here this instant!"

His yell echoed throughout the manor, followed by a deafening silence. After a brief moment, a young maid stepped out from behind a wall. Her dress was covered in black soot, and parts of it were singed. The glasses that sat on her face were black as night, and her face, too, was plastered with grit. She slowly walked over to Lord Buntly, and let out a meager whimper.

"S-Sorry Lord B-B-Buntly," she said not daring to make eye contact. "I... I was only trying to make the pie you had asked for. I had left the oven for only a moment! I must have used too much wood, as when I got back the--"

"Enough with the excuses!" Lord Buntly let out with a roar. "You know very well I have a meeting with the Regigriffs in two months! I already have enough to deal with preparing for their arrival without having to worry about repairing an entire kitchen!"

The guild had become increasingly difficult to work with in the past year. Their success with using magic to fuel steam engines had gone to their heads. Lord Buntly had been lucky to be able to even get this appointment with them. Without their help, the coal-loving fool who had been dominating the shipping business would continue to thrive and mock everything the city stood for! Lord Buntly wasn't fond of the Regigriffs, but there weren't many options when dealing with magic. They had a monopoly on the industry, and no one was willing to risk supporting one of the few alternatives in fear of being done in by the guild.

"Go to your room! Once I have taken care of the mess you have made, we will discuss your punishment!"

Madeline let out a slight yelp at the sudden outburst, but quickly nodded. "Y-Y-Y-Yes sir..." she said before scurrying away. Lord Buntly let out a sigh as she walked away.

"Oh Madeline... what am I going to do with you..."

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Madeline laid on her bed, her face pushed into her pillow in shame. She had messed up yet again. No matter what she tried to do, she always found a way to screw it up. Like the time when she tried to do the laundry and she ended up turning all of Lord Buntly's clothes purple. Or when she went to organize the books in the library, and ended up knocking all the shelves over. She couldn't seem to get anything right. She was just too accident prone.

She got up and let out a sigh.

"I'm sorry Lord Buntly... I don't mean to cause you this much trouble," she said to herself.

If she had been any other maid, she would have been fired after her first mistake. But Madeline's case was special. She had been orphaned at a very young age, and was left to roam the streets of Falksdale begging for money and food. She remembered all the nights she would have nothing to eat, huddling in the alleys trying to stay warm. Despite the city's golden rooftops and marble buildings, it could be a cruel place to live. If you didn't have a surplus of wealth, or an idea that could revolutionize the world, you didn't have a chance. Had she not met Lord Buntly, she would have probably died in the very alleys she slept in. He had took pity on her when she begged him for some spare change. He offered to take her to his manor, where she could learn how to take care of herself as a maid and earn money to eventually let her make it in the city.

Madeline thought back to her first day in the mansion. A smile crossed her face as she remembered immediately running to the kitchen and gobbling up some fruits that sat in a bowl on the counter. It wasn't until she had consumed two that she realized they were made of wax. Lord Buntly didn't get mad however. Instead, he asked one of the maids to fetch him some real ones from the garden, and let her feast on them while he got her preparations ready. Once she finished, he took her to take a bath. It took over an hour to clean off all the grime she had accumulated. He was shocked to find that her "black" hair was actually red once all the dust and dirt was gone. Afterwards, he took her to a grand room, and tucked her into a large bed. He read her some fairy tales before she finally fell asleep. She still couldn't understand why Lord Buntly had treated her so well. He must have had children beg him for money in the past. Why was she special? Maybe he saw something in her that she couldn't even see in herself. All she knew was that he loved her like she was his own.

Lord Buntly was quick to teach Madeline how to do her job, assigning the eldest and most skilled maids to mentor her. She would spend her days learning not just how to clean and care for the manor, but also to be a proper lady. Lord Buntly also hired the best scholars to teach her everything she needed to know. He wanted her to have everything she needed to

make it in Falksdale. Yet she still failed time and time again. Lord Buntly had given her everything she could ever need to succeed, but it always ended the same way.

"I owe you more than that," she said as she sat up. She wasn't going to take advantage of Lord Buntly's kindness anymore. He had shown her nothing but kindness and compassion. He had given her everything, and she couldn't repay the favor. After all these years with him, she had failed. But not anymore. She didn't care how hard she had to work. If it took countless nights practicing her duties, or taking note of everything the other maids did, it didn't matter. She was going to get better.

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A bell rang all around the manor as the many maids made their way to the foyer. Atop the grand staircase stood Lord Buntly. The meeting with the Regigriff Magic Guild had come, and everyone was getting ready to prepare for their arrival. The head of magical engineering was on her way to talk about possible business ventures, and Lord Buntly had gathered the maids to make sure everything was in order for the big day.

Among the crowd was Madeline. She had been eagerly waiting for this day to come. Over the past two months, she had dedicated all of her time to perfecting every job she was assigned. She had gone from a screw up to a competent maid. She hadn't had an accident in weeks, and even so, the last one was just a simple case of spilled tea. She had done so well that many of the maids and even Lord Buntly himself had congratulated her on her performance. Lord Buntly had even gone so far to raise her pay by a small amount as a show of good faith. Now with the meeting with the guild at hand, Madeline knew that this would be the perfect chance to prove that she wasn't just competent, but skilled at her job, and that she was no longer the little screw up that Lord Buntly had taken in all those years ago.

"The Regigriffs have sent one of their finest to see us today," Lord Buntly called out to the maids that had gathered below him. "As you know, the guild is rather... picky to say the least. If we want to make a good impression, we need things to be perfect! No lollygagging and no complaining! It's not just my future that is on the line!"

At the sound of the last comment, a wave of shutters made its way through the crowd of caretakers as the many maids worried about what would happen if they were to make a mistake. With a wave of his hand, Lord Buntly sent his staff to work. They dashed off in all directions to attend to the many chores and duties that had to be taken care of. Madeline was about to head off to check her duties for the day, when a call from Lord Buntly caught her attention.

"Madeline, may I see you for a moment?" he said. Madeline turned and ran straight to Lord Buntly.

"Yes sir!" she called giddily. If Lord Buntly had something he needed to tell her personally, then he must've had something important for her to do!

He looked at her for a little bit, an endearing smile on his face. He put his hand on her shoulder, and spoke.

"I know you have made a lot of progress these last two months Madeline. You have done a great job. It makes me so happy to see you doing so well."

Madeline's eyes grew wide. She was finally getting things right, and now Lord Buntly would reward her by entrusting her with the most important job he needed to get done! She wondered what it could be. Was it preparing the meal for him and the Regigriff to eat? Or would it be to clean up the library, where they would no doubt spend their time talking? Madeline didn't care what it was, or how much work it would be! She would do it, and do it well, so that Lord Buntly could finally see that she could take care of herself and anything life threw at her!

"...But unfortunately, I need you to sit today out," he said with a sigh.

Madeline's gaze slowly shifted from joy to sadness. "Wha- WHY!? I can help! I can do anything you ask me to do! I have-"

"Enough!" Lord Buntly called out. Madeline cowered down as Lord Buntly's face turned from kind to stern. "Today is... complicated. I think it would be best if you take the day off. I don't want anything bad to happen today, and you know how the Regigriffs are. Trust me, this is for the best," he said as he pointed up the stairs. "For now, just stay in your room and wait for the meeting to pass." Madeline wanted to object, but she knew better than to challenge Lord Buntly's commands a second time. She slumped over and stormed up the stairs...

As Madeline headed towards her room, she couldn't help but feel betrayed. She had proven herself to everyone in the manor, yet when the most important meeting was about to take place, she was sidelined! Lord Buntly had commended her, and yet he wouldn't let her help! What else did she need to do to prove herself?

Then an idea crossed her mind. If Lord Buntly didn't trust her with this meeting, then maybe she just had to show him that she could!

"I'll show Lord Buntly what I can do! I'll show him that I can handle anything he needs me to do!" she said with a smile crossing her face once more! "I bet that Regigriff will be thirsty when they get here! I can impress them with some homemade tea! Once I give them some, I can prove to both them AND Lord Buntly that I can handle myself by making sure their meeting is perfect!"

Feeling confident in her scheme, Madeline turned around and dashed for the kitchen. She was gonna make sure Lord Buntly never doubted her again!

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Madeline slowly walked down the hall as she made her way to the library. Lord Buntly had been giving the sorceress from the Regigriffs a tour of the mansion. While they were busy, Madeline had made an assortment of biscuits and tea. She made sure that they had been made to perfection, not using even a milligram more or less of an ingredient. She had arranged them on a tray, making sure that they were all evenly spaced. The tray itself was draped in a fine cloth to keep the treats warm. It was perfect, Madeline had made sure of it.

Voices from around the corner of the hall could be heard. Madeline, not wanting to be seen, crouched behind one of the tables beside her. If Lord Buntly or one of the other maids saw her, her plan would be ruined. She barely managed to avoid one of the maids when preparing the platter she was carrying. She had done the necessary work between the maids shifts, and barely made it out before the next one came in.

“-So now that we have toured the manor, we can talk business.” Lord Buntly remarked as he walked into the hallway. The sorceress from the guild followed him, nodding just to look like she was paying attention.

“Let me get the required papers in order, and then we shall move forward. I must thank the guild again for allowing us this most wonderful opportunity!” Lord Buntly remarked, obviously trying to suck up to the sorceress as much as possible. However, she didn’t seem to mind as she smiled and nodded. Lord Buntly quickly turned and made his way to the library. Once he was out of earshot, the sorceress let out a sigh.

“Finally. I thought he would never shut up...”

The remark made Madeline a bit uneasy. Lord Buntly had gone on and on about his distaste of the guild, and how they were “a bunch of uptight, pretentious tricksters who only cared for their bottom line.” However Madeline didn’t think they would be so rude as to insult their soon-to-be business partner in his own home. At least she waited for him to leave first, but it still left a sour taste in Madeline’s mouth.

Madeline got out from the corner and made her way to greet the sorceress. She walked up and gave her a smile, trying to hide the nervousness she was feeling.

“Hello Madam!” Madeline said with the most enthusiasm she could muster. “How are you enjoying your time at the manor?”

Madeline knew she was probably opening up a can of worms given the sorceress's remarks, but she knew if she was to do things right, she had to be polite and ask.

"Do not address me as 'madam,' child. I am Mistress Lindsey of the Regigriff magic guild-" the sorceress spoke. She had an even more demeaning tone than when she had spoken before. She gave off the impression that she knew she was a big deal and wanted to make sure everyone else knew too. "-or did you forget that bit?"

Madeline tried not to let the remark get to her. If she were to show any signs of distress, it would only make the sorceress think even less of her than she already did. It also didn't help that Madeline never bothered to ask the name of the guild representative; a detail she was now regretting."

"I am sorry Ma-...Mistress Lindsey. It must have slipped my mind."

"It would be best not to forget it again," Mistress Lindsey barked. "And to answer your question, I'd say this manor has a lot to be desired..."

"Would you like some tea and biscuits?" Madeline asked, trying to change the subject. "I have prepared the best the Buntly Manor has to offer!"

"Gladly. Anything to help make this meeting less of a bore," Mistress Lindsey said as she grabbed a biscuit. She took a bite, and chewed for a bit, getting a taste for it. Madeline stayed silent as she ate, letting her take in the flavor and texture.

"It's a bit dull to say the least..." the sorceress finally replied. "Hopefully the tea won't be as much of a disappointment."

Madeline gulped as she began to panic. This lady was even more difficult than Lord Buntly had let on. From her arrogant attitude to her absurdly high standards, this Regigriff was nothing more than a colossal pain. Madeline was only trying to make things better. She was trying to prove that she could handle herself. But now she was realizing why Lord Buntly had told her to stay back. With how Mistress Lindsey was acting, one screw up could be the end of the deal, or worse.

Madeline put the platter down on a table next to them, and began to pour the tea. Her hands were shaking with fear. She couldn't screw this up, but from the looks of it she already had. She just needed to give the mistress her tea, and then she could run off before Lord Buntly came back. Maybe the mistress wouldn't mention that a maid had brought her some food, or at the very least she wouldn't bother describing which maid it was. Maybe Lord Buntly wouldn't be able to figure out it was her, and she could forget this ever happened.

Madeline finished pouring the tea, and picked up the cup as slowly as possible. "H-H-Here you go," she said as she turned to hand over the small cup. She extended her arms forward as Mistress Lindsey reached out to grab it. But just as she did...

"Achoo!"

Madeline jumped just a bit as she let out the small sneeze. However, it was enough for her to lose her grip of the cup for just a moment.

The cup slipped out of her tiny hands, and fell onto the sorceress, spilling tea all over her red robe. Madeline's heart fell as she watched the sorceress's expression turn from annoyance to pure and utter rage!

"How dare you!" the sorceress yelled! "Don't you know how much these robes cost to make! It will cost the guild a fortune to replace this robe! How incompetent do you have to be to screw up something so simple as serving tea!"

Madeline took a few steps back at the sight of the sorceress's outburst. "I-I-I'm sorry Miss L-"

"It's Mistress Lindsey!" The sorceress bellowed. "This meeting has been nothing more than a drag, but this incident turned it into an absolute disaster!" She raised her hand and pointed it at Madeline. A bright blue glow began to emanate from her palm as she looked Madeline dead in the eyes. Her expression had turned from rage to a sinister smirk.

"I'm s-s-s-sorry Mistress L-I-I-lindsey! It was an a-a-accident!" Madeline begged. The sorceress giggled at the plea.

"For someone with such slippery hands as yourself, a more fitting form is needed! Let us see how well you do as a soggy, swindling serpent!" Mistress Lindsey called out as the glow in her hand grew larger and larger. Magic swirled around her as she prepared her spell. Madeline tried to turn and run, but before she could do so, the sorceress shot out a magic bolt at her! It struck Madeline dead in the chest. Madeline shook a bit as the magic flowed through her. As the spell dispersed inside her, Mistress Lindsey chuckled once more.

Madeline stood still as her body began to feel odd, a tingling sensation flaring up at the base of her spine. She squirmed a bit as the strange feeling moved outward as if it was growing from her. Her panties began to feel tight as a strange pressure built up inside them. She bent over a bit as the force against her dainty undergarments grew larger and larger, until...

"RIP!!!"

Madeline turned to look at her rear. She gasped in a mix of terror and amazement as a slender, scaly, serpentine tail burst out from under her dress. It wiggled back and forth as the prickling sensations made their way all over her body. All Madeline could do was let out a fearful whimper as her dress began to feel tight. What had this witch done to her?!? Madeline looked the devilish woman in the face, as if begging her to stop what was happening to her. However, the evil Regigriff only chuckled at the plea. Madeline whimpered some more as she looked down at her rapidly changing body.

Madeline's body grew taller, her parts billowing out and warping as the spell did its work. The sound of fabric ripping drew her attention to her hands, as her dainty white gloves ripped open, showing the blue, draconic claws that were once her hands. Green webbing connected her joints as sharp talons extended from the tips of her digits. The sight of the inhuman appendages only made Madeline panic even more. She was quickly becoming more beast than human, all while the Regigriff woman watched with sickening pride, as if she was disciplining a small child.

Madeline looked downward as the changes took to her lower half. Her stockings, unable to contain the changes happening to her feet, ripped apart. Her shoes split open as her feminine feet ballooned out into sharp claws. She then noticed that the carpet below had been getting farther away. Her neck was slowly growing longer, further adding to her expanding girth. The height increase gave Madeline a small sense of vertigo, causing her more distress as the changes accelerated. Her gaze darted to her nose, as her face fell victim to the spells magic. She watched as it pushed forward into a muzzle. Her teeth grew larger and sharp to fill up her expanded jawline.

The black and white dress Madeline had been wearing could no longer hold Madeline's ever swelling form. It stretched and tore as her now draconian body let itself free from her human garments. She tried to let out a call for help, but all that came out was a gurgled roar. Her body elongated further, her neck curling around as she gazed at her ever growing tail flailing about. Madeline's stance began to wobble, her body no longer suited for a biped stance. Her efforts to keep herself upright were fruitless and she couldn't help but fall backward without grace. A large crash echoed throughout the manor as Madeline, now a luscious, long leviathan, laid sprawled about on top of what was once a table.

Meanwhile, Lord Buntly had gotten everything perfect for the meeting. He had decorated the library with all of his most valuable magic items and had gathered his finest books on the subject matter. He had laid them all out on the grand table that sat in the large sanctuary. He was about to lay down the documents regarding their deal, when he heard the loud crash. The sound startled Lord Buntly, making him scatter the documents all around him. He turned to the direction of the loud noise, his face a mix of anger and fear.

"Dear gods, what the bloody hell happened this time?" he said as he dashed off towards the commotion. Of all days for something to happen, it had to be today. What could it have

been? He had made sure that everything was perfect! Everything had been taken care of. Nothing could have gone wrong! But as he arrived at the sorry scene, he realized that there was one thing he could never fully take care of:

Madeline's ability to screw up her orders.

"Wha-" was all Lord Buntly could let out at the sight.

Mistress Lindsey laughed at the sight of his panicked face. "One of your maids made a rather fatal mistake it seems. But don't worry, I took care of punishing her for you."

Lord Buntly gave the Regigriff a sour look, and then turned to Madeline. "Madeline dear, are you alright?!? She didn't hurt you did she?!?" he called. Madeline tried to speak once more, but all she could do was let out whimpers and roars. She flailed around as she tried to explain what had happened, though her wild gestures only seemed to shatter the remains of the table under her even more.

"I think this form suits her better," the sorceress said with a smirk. "Serves her right for spilling tea all over my robe, don't you think?"

"Change her back this instant!" Lord Buntly yelled as he turned to the vile Regigriff. She stepped back in disbelief at the sudden command.

"I beg your pardon?!?" she remarked.

Lord Buntly stood between her and Madeline and shouted, "You think you can come into MY HOUSE, turn one of my maids into a serpent, and then laugh in front of me?!? Who do you think you are?!?"

With that comment, the Regigriff scowled and retaliated. "I am Mistress Lindsey of the Regigriff Magic Guild! And do YOU THINK you can talk to me like that and get away with it?!? If you don't apologize this instant, you can kiss this deal of yours goodbye!"

Lord Buntly's face turned a bright red. His handlebar mustache almost looked like it was going to unwind in his rage, and his teeth gritted together as he prepared to go all out against the Regigriff.

"FORGET THE MISERABLE DEAL!" he bellowed. His proclamation echoed through the manor. Madeline and the sorceress couldn't help but be quiet and look at Lord Buntly in terror as he proceeded to chew out the repulsive magic user. "Honestly, I should have expected something like this with how utterly VILE you Regigriffs are! You all think you can just do whatever you please because you power our city?!? It is about time someone told you what you really are! VILE, HEARTLESS DICTATORS! You think you can control everyone in the city,

BUT NOT ME! I have had it with you and your guild! Change my maid back and leave at once! You and your guild are no longer welcome in this manor!"

The manor fell silent. Mistress Lindsey and Madeline just stood there for what felt like a lifetime. Finally, the sorceress spoke. "I am one of the Regigriffs finest! I don't need to be treated this way! I hope you are happy, Buntly! You won't get even a bronze piece from me or the guild ever again! Good luck trying to make it without us!" she scoffed, clearly rather butthurt by Lord Buntly's show of dominance. She turned and ran off, stomping down the hall as she made her way for the exit.

"...And she didn't even bother with fixing her mistake," Lord Buntly said as he let out a disappointed sigh. He turned to face Madeline, and softly spoke. "Don't worry my dear, I'll find the best magic user money can buy, and I'll have them change you back! I am sorry this happened to you. I am sure you just wanted to help out. I just wish I had made it more clear why I wanted to handle this myself," he said as he reached up and rubbed Madeline's face. She purred a bit and smiled at Lord Buntly's gesture. He had just sacrificed the whole deal for her. No doubt this would make things harder for him. Without the Regigriffs, what was he going to do? She whimpered a bit at the thought.

Lord Buntly caught on to her distress. "I know. How are we gonna make it in Falksdale with the Regigriffs against us? No doubt they will try and run us into the ground. This is quite a problem we have on our hands, huh Madeline." She nodded. This meeting had left them both in quite a bad spot. They would need a miracle stroke of luck to get out of this one.

Lord Buntly stood silent in thought. But then, as if the gods had spoken to him, he sprang up! "I got it!" he said as he turned to Madeline! "I know how to solve this mess!"

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The Manor's back yard was buzzing with chatter as the many guests admired the blue serpent that swam in the pool before them. They all dressed in regal blue gowns, adorned with the emblems featuring a sapphire serpent much like Madeline herself. In front of the pool stood Lord Buntly, dressed in his usual crimson red suit. Many high class nobles gathered around him, asking him various questions regarding how he acquired his "pet" cerulean serpent. Lord Buntly would boast about how he had supposedly wrestled it when it dared to attack one of his prized shipping vessels, and he tamed it using nothing more than his brute strength and regal charm. Madeline rolled her eyes at the increasingly grandiose fables, but she was happy that Lady Casper and the Cerulean Serpent Guild were having a good time at the party.

Once Lord Buntly finished his tale once more, he turned to Madeline to boast yet again about his brilliant idea. "See, what did I tell you! Lady Casper is ready to work out a deal, and it's all thanks to you. What luck that of all the things that witch from the Regigriff guild could turn you into, she ended up turning you into the crest of one of her competitors!"

Madeline nodded in agreement, though she was a little tired of hearing it again and again. As soon as Lord Buntly noticed that she had become a cerulean serpent, he immediately sent word to Lady Casper. She was the head of one of the few magic guilds that were trying to compete with the Regigriffs. They had been struggling to find someone to help fund their alternative means of harnessing magic. With the bridges having been burned with the Regigriffs, Lord Buntly felt it was the perfect time to invest in some new competition for the dastardly guild.

"Lady Casper says her new mana condensers will cut the cost of magic generation in half! With my funding, she will be able to make enough of them to power all of Falksdale in just over a year. She predicts that we will get over a thousand percent return on our investment if all goes according to plan. Of course, I will be sure to pay you for your efforts, Madeline. Twenty percent of all earnings should be more than enough for you to be able to not only make it in Falksdale, but also to do it in high luxury!"

Madeline smiled and rubbed her head against Lord Buntly. With the funds from the investment, she would finally be able to take care of herself like he always wanted. At last, she would no longer need to worry about screwing up her chores, or causing meetings to go south. She would have everything she needed to live the life Lord Buntly had always wanted for her. Of course, while she waited for the investment, she had to stay in this more beastly form. The good favor she was giving Lord Buntly was too good to pass up.

"Don't worry," Lord Buntly said as he noticed Madeline's uneasy look. "Once we are done with this endeavor, I'll send for one of the magicians across the gulf to change you back. We can't have one of the Serpents do it, lest I admit my stories are nothing more than a fabrication."

Madeline chuckled a bit, though it came out as a more beastly gurgle. She was happy that things had worked out in the end. With this deal on the horizon, it seems her mishap had been a miracle in disguise. And the best part was, with her in this state, she was exempt from her duties! She could just relax and let herself be pampered by Lady Casper and her guild! And all while the manor went completely accident free!

Across the pool, the entertainment Lord Buntly ordered had begun their grand show. Jugglers, dancers, and performers all went about doing their tricks as the guests watched in wonder. A firebreather lit his torch and filled his mouth with a slurry of oil. He spit it out, creating a beautiful stream of fire that danced in the air above him. The crowd let out a cheer, taken back by the spectacle.

Madeline however, had been paying too much attention to the dancers that were performing to the side. The sudden flare of light surprised Madeline and made her jump back in shock. However, she wasn't the petite maid she once was a few days ago. Her massive serpent body fell back, diving into the water full force. The crash sent a huge wave of water out in all directions, drenching the crowd and performers. Madeline resurfaced, only to find the many party-goers looking at her in dumbfoundment. Embarrassed, she sunk back down into the pool in order to give the guest some time to dry off.

"I guess things won't be completely accident free..." she thought to herself with a small chuckle.