

My Career at the Magical Beings' Rehabilitation Center

An extra chapter by K. M. Shea

“All three of your brats are in school now? Wow, I feel aged. It seems like just yesterday you were waddling like a hippo, pregnant with your youngest,” I said, adjusting my earpiece as I walked down the Chinese dragon hallway of the MBRC. (How an underground facility managed to get perfect cell reception still boggled me.)

“Ashley is only in preschool; it’s hardly anything to wail about. And thank you for giving me a boost to my confidence,” Fran said from the other end of the line. “I will be sure to go to you the next time I want to know how I look.”

“I will not be faulted for this. Ashley was a *massive* baby. You looked ready to pop by your second trimester,” I said.

“I did resemble a whale,” Fran admitted.

“A whale with very stylish hair.”

“*Thanks.*”

“Of course,” I said, glancing down at my phone when my ear piece beeped. “I’m sorry Fran, but I’ve got another call coming in that I have to take.”

“Work or personal?”

“Both.”

“Oh, if that’s the case, tell Hunter I say hello, and thank his wife for my birthday card for me, would you?”

“Sure. I’ll talk to you tonight?”

“Yeah, until then!”

I smiled even though Fran couldn’t see me as I accepted Hunter’s call. “Hello, Hunter. What’s wrong? Did Cecelia kick you out of the bedroom again?”

“Considering you’re supposed to be *my* friend, you should side with me more often than with her,” Hunter said. The fact that he was complaining and his voice wasn’t its usual throaty, “I’m-handsome-and-I-know-it” tone meant that I was right on with my guess.

“Give me some credit, Hunter. I side with whoever is right,” I said, reaching the main chamber of the MBRC. I smiled and nodded to those who stopped to bow or salute me as I climbed the stairs with expert dexterity in spite of the three-inch heels I was wearing. (Training in high heels significantly helped my lifespan. I could outrun some of the members of my security team in them!)

“You side with her every time!”

“That’s because she’s always right. The sooner you realize this, the happier you will be,” I said.

“Just for that, I think I’m going to pull out the massive, magical retail unit I was going to launch in Chicago.”

“A retail unit? You’re going to build a magical *mall*?” I said, delight filling my voice.

“You have to get some cookie elves to open a restaurant in it!”

My newest guard—a nervous-looking dark elf—glanced at me in wonder as we broke off from the stairs and started down the phoenix hallway.

“I was considering funding several cookie elf restaurants, seeing how much you love them, but now I don’t think I will.”

“Several? Hey, if you can staff it, do you think you could open a cookie elf stand in the MBRC? I keep making a motion for it, but Aysel blocks me every time, the rat. Anyway, I’m sure there would be a significant profit from it.”

“Perhaps, but speaking of your partner, I need you to do something.”

“Oh, how the tables have turned.”

“I just submitted a request for a larger pixie powder distribution license and emailed it to your personal email address. Could you look it over? Whenever I submit it to your work account your dear *partner* deletes it.”

“Certainly,” I said. “You do know I have a boggart lawyer in my staff, right?”

“I could never forget my run-ins with Ed,” Hunter dryly said.

“Right. I’ve got to go. I’m almost at my office. Fran says hello, and thank you to Cecelia for the birthday card. Also, could you ask Cecelia to give me a call later this week? I need help shopping for my next business suit. A troll threw up on my old one, and I haven’t been able to get the stink out.”

“I’m sure it will delight her to help. Take care, Morgan.”

“You, too. Good luck groveling.”

“Thanks,” Hunter said, his voice full of sarcasm before I hung up.

I removed my ear-bud and slid it in a secret pocket in my black slacks. “Krusher?” I called, looking over my shoulder.

My goblin shadow was there, discreetly directing the dark elf and minotaur that were following me as part of the day’s security team.

“Yes, Miss Fae,” Harrison said, his fingers briefly resting on the battery-operated nail gun attached to his belt.

I smiled at the affectionate title. Even though I was married and had a kid, Harrison still called me Miss Fae. “I heard an MBRC guard got injured breaking up a fight between a chimera and a manticore this morning. Is he okay?”

“He has already made a full recovery and has returned to active duty,” Harrison said.

“And the fight?”

“Yes, Miss Fae.”

“Wonderful. Thanks for taking care of it, Krusher,” I said, fondly smiling as I stopped outside a set of beautiful wooden doors that towered tall enough to give entrance to a small dragon.

There was a golden plaque on each door. The one on the left read, “*MBRC Co-Administrator Moonspell*.” The right one said, “*MBRC Co-Administrator Fae*.”

My plaque had sticky residue on it where Devin kept trying to stick a post-it-note with his last name on it, but Aysel seemed determined that my plaque should stay with my maiden name.

Steeling myself, I pushed the door open. “Aysel, if you keep ripping up Hunter’s license renewals, the MBRC Board will take our cafeteria privileges again. I’m pretty hooked to my iced frappes—did you know the Bronze Fist dwarf clan adjusted the frappe machine so it will add chocolate chips to your drink?—so I recommend you stop it immediately.”

“You’re late,” Aysel said. He was sequestered behind his massive wooden desk that was arranged directly across the room from, and facing my modern, glass desk.

“I am not,” I said, brushing off my slacks before plopping down in my office chair. I looked around my desk. “I miss Baobab.”

“She hasn’t been on staff for three years,” Aysel dryly said as one of our three joint secretaries—a shy little leprechaun—scurried between our desks. The leprechaun slapped the renewal license Hunter had mentioned on my desk and scampered away.

“I still miss her. She always left me little notes, warning me when you were in a snit,” I sighed. My wonderful secretary was off, living in beautiful New Hampshire with her dwarf husband. She still sent me Christmas cards, which I loved. They have the best pictures every year.

“Did you finish looking over the notes from last night’s board meeting?”

“Yes. I’m surprised they got Elros to agree to add a gnome representative to the board,” I said, crossing my ankles.

“Never underestimate gnomes,” Aysel advised.

“Are you going to Harmoni’s birthday party next week?” I asked.

“What does my niece have to do with gnomes?”

“She doesn’t. I just want to know if you’re coming.”

Aysel sighed and rolled his eyes. “I suppose I will. Why?”

“Would you go in on a gift with me for her?”

“I suppose, provided I only provide funds and am not required to take part in the selection.”

“Deal,” I said, picking up the framed picture my god-daughter had given me a few months ago. It depicted an extremely unhappy-looking stick person and a smiling stick person sitting behind desks. My name was printed under the smiling stick person; can you guess who the frowner was?

Behind me, Harrison stirred.

“What is it, Krusher?”

“There is a visitor—,”

The doors banged open, and in walked my husband—unusually ruffled and mussed as he was dragged forward by our four-year-old daughter.

“Mommy!” Lindy, my precious daughter, said as she tried to launch herself in my direction.

Devin yanked her back by the pink princess backpack on her back. “Lindy, what have I said about running in the office?”

Lindy squirmed out of her backpack and walked as quickly as possible in my direction. Devin smiled and set the backpack by the door.

“Mommy!” Lindy said, giving me a gap-toothed smile. Her pale yellow eyes—the same shade as Devin’s—sparkled with love and laughter.

“Hello, Baby,” I said, hugging Lindy when she climbed up on my lap. “What are you doing here?”

“Daddy thaid his heart is empty and the light in his thoul has gone out because he mithes you tho much,” Lindy said, a slight lisp to her words thanks to her two missing teeth.

“Really?” I said, grinning at my husband. “And I haven’t even been gone for three hours. That must be a new record.”

“Lindy,” Devin hissed. “Daddy told you *not* to tell Mommy that!”

Lindy gave Devin a look of disgust.

“Thank you for visiting, Baby, but I do need to talk to Daddy,” I said.

Lindy sighed dramatically. “Yeth, Mommy,” she said, pitching her voice so she sounded heartbroken.

Behind us, Harrison shifted, distracting my pint-sized daughter.

“Kruther!” Lindy said, flinging herself off my lap. She scrambled up to the tall goblin who stooped to pick her up. When she was nestled into his chest, Lindy removed Harrison’s sunglasses and cooed over his “Pretty eyeth.”

“Good timing, Devin. I wanted to ask you when your next business trip to the Fairy Council would be. I know you said next month, but I forgot Aysel and I are going to a conference, and I need to make sure the dates don’t coincide,” I said, standing and joining my husband in the middle of our office.

“Right, I’ll call my assistant in Korea and get the dates. Good morning, Love,” Devin said, kissing my temple.

“Funny, with all your powers of charming females, I would have thought you would manage to get your own daughter to like you at least a little,” Aysel said as he ambled up to us.

Devin looked down on my co-administrator. “It’s just a phase she’s going through,” he said.

“A phase that has lasted all four years of her life,” Aysel dryly said. “I would say she inherited it from her mother, but she most strongly bears a resemblance to you.”

“Morgan, are you *certain* you wish to remain here? Couldn’t you open up your own rehabilitation business at the new Fairy Council location?”

“We’re not moving to Korea. My mother would kill me,” I said.

“You’re obligated by contract to remain co-administrator for two years,” Aysel said.

“Sometimes I wonder what you had to give your wife to bribe her into marrying you,” Devin said.

Aysel scowled. “Leave her out of this.”

“Aysel, give Devin a break. He was up all night on a video conference with the Seelie Queen, convincing her that Chicago is a good location for a winter-vacation home,” I said.

Aysel raised his eyebrows. “You succeeded?”

“Yes,” Devin said, rubbing his neck.

“Well done.”

“Thank you.”

“Guardian Aythel, Guardian Aythel,” Lindy said, tugging on the hem of Aysel’s lord of the rings elf robe.

“I wish you hadn’t taught her that,” Aysel grumbled. “What is it, street urchin?” he said to my daughter.

“I have a joke. Do you want to hear it?”

“Must I?”

“You look tired. It mutht be becauthe you’ve been running through my mind all day!” Lindy said, giving Aysel her sweetest smile.

Aysel stared at my daughter as everyone in the room was silent in shock. Aysel lifted his gaze to bore holes into Devin’s skull.

“I did *not* teach her that,” Devin said.

“I have another! Do you want to hear it?” Lindy asked.

“NO!” Devin and I shouted.

Lindy shrugged and thumped past Aysel.

“I wonder,” Aysel said, narrowing his eyes.

“Devin, who have you been talking to that Lindy heard that pick-up line?” I asked.

“No one. I would never stoop to saying something so cheesy. My flirtation is of a much higher caliber, as you know,” Devin said, winking at me as he slipped his arm around my lower back. “You look beautiful today,” he added, kissing me on the corner of my mouth.

“Thank you,” I said, watching Aysel chase Lindy. “I should be home early today. What do you want for dinner?”

“Mmm, you,” Devin said, briefly kissing me.

“Devin!” I said.

Devin chuckled, making my spin shiver. “How about seafood?”

I narrowed my eyes. “If you try to give me oysters as an attempted aphrodisiac again, there will be consequences.”

“I learned my lesson the first time with that one,” Devin said, kissing me on my nose.

“Stop that,” I fussed as Lindy—Aysel lagging behind her—ran past.

“Why?”

“I’m at *work*, in case you haven’t noticed.”

“So? I wouldn’t care if you wanted to make out in front of the entire Fairy Council,” Devin said.

I rolled my eyes. “We can’t all live as fearlessly as you. Which reminds me, Madeline and Frank are coming to dinner tomorrow.”

“Why?”

“Because we’re friends.”

Devin sighed.

“You’re friends with Madeline, too,” I said.

“Only in the weakest sense of the term. Did you buy a flea bomb for when they leave?” Devin asked, stopping Lindy long enough to fix her pigtails. He let her go when Aysel just strolled within an arm’s length of her.

The speedy four-year-old zipped off, and Aysel gave Devin a dirty look before he trailed our daughter in a controlled but stubborn stroll.

“Yes, although I don’t think it will be necessary. Ever since I bought the flea shampoo for Frank, his outbreaks have been much less frequent.”

“Really?”

“Yes. I’ll have to call Frey and tell him thanks—he’s the one that told me about it,” I said.

“I have caught you,” Aysel said to Lindy.

“Guardian Aythel, you have caught *many* women,” Lindy said.

Aysel stared at the four-year-old. “I beg your pardon,” he said.

“Can we take next week off from social engagements?” Devin asked.

“No. It’s Harmoni’s birthday. As her godparent, I really need to be there.”

“You just don’t want to send a refusal to Asahi and Kadri.”

“Do you?”

Devin sighed. “No, I suppose not. How about the week after that?”

“We’re entertaining Councilman Vincent for two nights. Remember, he’s coming from Korea to work out the trade agreement between the dwarf clans from Wales and the Dutch mermaids,” I said.

“How could I forget. The week after that?”

“I think that will work.”

“Good. Block off your schedule. We can take Lindy to your parents for a few days,” Devin said.

“The universe must be joking,” Aysel said.

Devin and I turned our attention to the rather peeved high elf, who was holding Lindy so she dangled by the collar of her shirt.

“On second thought, probably not. It’s most likely your fault, Morgan,” Aysel said, scowling.

“What is my fault?” I asked.

Aysel’s hands glowed with magic as he jabbed a finger at Lindy. “Of course *you* would see fit to give birth to the first female Pooka, *ever*,” he said.

When his magic-covered fingers grew close enough, a patch of a pale yellow shield sprouted between Aysel and Lindy. When Aysel withdrew his fingers, the vapor formed into a tiny horse the size of a quarter that reared before dissipating entirely.

My jaw dropped.

Devin’s jaw dropped.

“Which begs the question, of course, *can* you give birth to more than one Pooka?” Aysel said, cocking his head as he studied Devin and me like we were scientific specimens.

“H-Harrison,” I called in a small voice.

Harrison stepped forward and took Lindy from Aysel. My beautiful daughter giggled and snuggled into Harrison’s shoulder as Harrison whispered into his radio.

“I’m not sure how I feel about you asking another man for help after the stunner we just received,” Devin said.

“It’s only because it’s Harrison that I called for him,” I said, retreating to my desk.

Harrison picked up the princess backpack and looped it over his free arm.

“I should tell my father about this new development,” Aysel said.

“No, you shouldn’t!” I said.

Aysel gave me a smile that was surprisingly smug and childish for Aysel.

“If you break the news to *anyone* before we do, I will have your ass hauled in front of the Fairy Council *and* I will tell your wife!” Devin said, brandishing a finger at Aysel.

“Come along, Sir,” Harrison said, nudging Devin towards the door like a border collie herding sheep.

“Morgan, we need to talk about this,” Devin said over Harrison’s shoulder.

“Later,” I said, waving to my husband and daughter.

“Bye-bye, Mommy,” Lindy said.

“Morgan!”

My shared office was quiet when Harrison shut the door, cutting off Devin’s protests.

I leaned back in my chair and tried to process what happened. Of course, Aysel couldn’t let me have my peace and had to be an insufferable know-it-all.

“You have no respect for tradition, do you? My father might have been right when he said partnering with you would bring this facility to its knees.”

“Aysel,” I groaned.

“I wonder if I could call him,” Aysel said, looking at his wristwatch.

“Don’t even *think* about it,” I hissed, angrily eyeing Aysel across the room. “Besides, it’s night-time in Korea right now.”

“He’s not in Korea. Because he has junior status as a Councilman, he was sent—by your *dear* husband—to Russia to settle a dispute with Baba Yaga.”

“How sad for him,” I said, pushing a pencil across my desk.

Aysel shuffled papers for a moment. “Are you alright?”

“Aysel, I just learned my daughter is a future Pooka. Do you think I’m alright?”

“I was just trying to be sensitive.”

“So some of the information from that *Sensitivity in the Workplace* seminar we hosted last month actually sank through your pretty head?”

“My head is not pretty; it is handsome.”

“Whatever. You and Devin could have started a boy-band if you dressed right,” I sighed.

Something on Aysel’s desk beeped. Aysel dug out his cell phone and frowned. “I’ll be out for the rest of the day,” he said, abruptly standing.

“Hm? Why, is your favorite store having a blow-out sale of last season’s elf robes?” I asked.

Aysel shot me a look and he flipped his dark, glossy hair over his shoulder. “Call me when the optometry branch sends us its projected budget.”

“Right-o.”

Aysel left our office, his robes swirling behind him. He was gone about thirty seconds before the door opened again, this time to reveal my handsome husband.

“Didn’t you leave?” I asked.

Devin arched an eyebrow at me, looking as handsome as a magazine model as he sauntered across my office. “I would never go without a proper farewell,” he said, leaning across my desk to kiss me on my lips.

“How did you get Aysel out of here?” I asked as my various secretaries and staff members attempted to disappear and blend in with the office furniture.

“I sent him an email from one of his peon’s accounts stating that they saw someone hitting on his wife.”

“Sometimes I forget how deviously clever you are,” I said.

Devin chuckled, a sound as rich as a chocolate truffle. “Why of course,” he said, his eyes flashing before he leaned in to kiss me again. “Although, I want a promise from you that we will talk about Lindy.”

“We will,” I said. “Tonight, after I get off work.”

“Must it be tonight? I thought we established I was going to have you for dinner?”

“*Devin!*”

Devin snatched one last kiss before he leaned back to avoid me when I swatted at him. “Have a wonderful day, Love.”

“Thanks. You, too,” I said.

“I will think of you until you are home, in my arms,” Devin said with a debonair wink.

I rolled my eyes. “Goodbye, Devin.”

After another peal of chocolate-rich laughter, Devin was gone.

I leaned back in my chair and rubbed my eyes as a faun approached my desk.

“There’s a rehabilitation certification for you to sign off on, Madame Administrator,” the faun said, sliding a folder on my desk.

“Now? Typically rehabilitated beings aren’t graduated at this time of the year,” I stopped talking when I read the name on the certificate.

I smiled and reached for the fancy feather pen Fran had given me for Christmas two years ago. I signed it with as much style as I could, adding a personal note below my signature.

“Flicka, could you make a copy of this certificate and have it framed?” I asked.

“Of course, Madame Administrator,” the faun said. “You have a right to be proud,” she added.

“Thank you. I can’t take much credit though,” I said, stamping the MBRC seal in a gob of wax on the certificate.

“Of course you can, Madame Administrator,” the faun firmly said. “If it weren’t for you, he never would have started the rehabilitation process.”

“Maybe. Either way, his graduation of the program is something that should be remembered.”

“Yes, Madame Administrator,” the faun said, holding out her hand for the certificate. I took one last glance at the paper before passing it over with a smile.

We, Co-Administrator Morgan Fae and Co-Administrator Aysel Moonspell, commend Krad Temero for his completion of the MBRC rehabilitation certification.

Well done—little pervert—and welcome to the melding of the magical and mundane.