

## Trick or Treat

### A MBRC short by K. M. Shea

I frowned so hard my lips puckered oddly as I looked from Krad to the Loki costume in my hands. “Please?”

“No!” Krad wrinkled his nose at the costume and his pretty face twisted in disgust. “Absolutely not.”

“But you’ll look *amazing* in it,” I said.

“I told you I would only dress up for your jokes-or-desserts if you presented me with a superhero costume. That is *not* a superhero costume!”

“It’s trick-or-treat. And I know that’s what you said...but it’s Loki—Thor’s hot brother. Thor is a superhero.”

“Being the brother of a superhero is not the same as *being* a superhero!”

“I don’t understand why you have your underwear in a knot,” I complained. “You used to act like the classic supervillain. That’s what Loki is, a supervillain. An extremely hot and thoroughly misunderstood supervillain.”

Krad folded his arms across his chest and sulked in his seat. “I’m not wearing it.”

I frowned down at the costume. At this rate it would be wasted—which was a real crime as the MBRC had a good number of magical hotties in its rank.

“Make your harebrained fiancé wear it,” Krad said.

“No way. Devin is dressed up like a pirate. Got his ear pierced so he could wear a silver hoop and even watched all the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies in preparation.” He made an incredibly *hot* pirate, but I would never tell him that. “You’re wearing the Loki costume, and that’s final.”

Krad narrowed his eyes and I could feel his power ripple. “Make me, weak mortal.”

I wasn’t at all impressed—whenever Krad doesn’t get his way he throws little temper tantrums like this. So I thought of Fran and Madeline as I laid my hand on his bicep.

Krad leaped from the desk as if he had been electrocuted, messing up the neat, orderly lines the desks were arranged in. “*Fine*,” he spat. “Cheater.”

“You won’t be alone, Krad. The whole class will be dressing up for Halloween with you,” I said.

“Perhaps, but why do we all have to dress up anyway? You’re not dressing up,” Krad complained.

“It’s a cultural exercise,” I patiently explained—never mind that last week Krad had attended my advanced placement lecture class where we had in-depth discussed Halloween and our plans for the actual holiday. “All the advanced humanities classes are participating in order to experience it like American kids would. Someone has to be the designated house to visit.” I glanced at the hoard of candy piled up by my classroom door—I still needed to send in my receipts to the accounting department so they would reimburse me.

The idea was hatched by my longtime advanced class—who really had no business still being an actual class but by now served more as a tutoring session for the rapidly rising stars in the magical community. They had heard about trick-or-treating from various sources, and had asked me about it. I had explained it best as I could and several of my students—most notably Madeline and Asahi—asked if we could set up an MBRC version.

So my classroom and a few other designated spots in the MBRC—like Dr. Creamintin’s office, the help desk, and I think Asahi submitted the paperwork for Aysel’s office—were fully stocked with candy and ready to receive MBRC trick-or-treaters.

Krad poked at his costume with a snotty look on his face. “I bet *Aysel* doesn’t have to dress up,” he sneered.

I sighed. “I tried, but there’s not enough blackmail in the world to get Aysel into a Halloween costume. I wanted him to dress up as Legolas,” I added mournfully.

Someone knocked on the door.

“Oh, that should be the first of them. Come on and look. You’ll feel better when you see others dressed up.” I grabbed Krad and dragged him to the door. He stomped his feet and screwed up his face, but he couldn’t hide his fascination when I opened the door.

“Trick or treat!” a number of magical beings chorused.

I was holding an empty bowl—I hadn’t yet had a chance to plunk candy into it—which I almost dropped when I saw the costumes.

The first group was a unicorn, a fairy, and a vampire.

The unicorn had dressed up like a carousel horse—clever, but my childhood felt it was sacrilegious—the fairy was going as a librarian based on the stack of books she carried, and the vampire was...a *cable* guy?

“Wow, you guys look great,” I said.

“Am I not sufficiently terrorizing?” the vampire-cable-guy asked.

“Uh...” I said.

“My psychology teacher assured me that cable employees are among the most frightening—I could come to your house anywhere between eight in the morning and five in the afternoon, and if you don’t hear me I’ll leave you a little note to reschedule and you’ll be stuck inside the house all day again,” the vampire chattered.

“Yes, that is really scary,” I agreed, reaching for one of the bags of candy.

The vampire smiled—flashing his pronounced fangs. “Thank you!” He tossed a cookie into my bowl. The librarian fairy opened her top book—revealing the stack of books were hollow—and added a fairy candy to my bowl, then grabbed a chocolate truffle from the little bag tied to the unicorn’s neck and placed it on top.

“Thank you!” they chorused as they trooped away.

“Wait! This is not how trick-or-treat-goes...and they’re gone.” I glanced down at my bowl, more tempted by the goodies than I should have been considering I had polished off half a bag of kit kat bars in my office a few hours ago.

Krad peered over my shoulder. “Did the unicorn give you the truffle?”

“Yeah.”

Krad snagged it and popped it in his mouth. “By the shield of Captain America—he must have given honey clover to a cookie elf to make these.”

“Someone misunderstood. During trick-or-treating the people at the houses give candy to the kids who dress up,” I said.

Krad shrugged. “I thought there was going to be a big after party. Take all the candy there—but I would not complain if I were you.” Krad fished the cookie the vampire had given me out of the bowl. “These desserts are better than the artificially flavored filth you intended to give them.”

“Hey!”

Krad hefted his packaged costume into the air. “I will change into this...*thing* for the party. But for now I will keep you company.”

“You just want to see if anyone else will give me treats.”

Krad shrugged and strolled across the room.

The pattern of the trick-or-treaters being the ones to pass out the treats ran for the full day, and I never saw a repeat costume.

A centaur dressed up like a My Little Pony, and three stylish elf brothers posing as old men with walkers and canes shocked me so much Krad ate most of the maple truffles they left before I noticed. A sphinx went as Simba from the Lion King, a werewolf dressed up as a pet store owner passed through, and a pack of fairies going as unconvincing football players mobbed me as well. My favorite, though was group of vampires who were trying to win the most frightening costume class for the after party. They had dressed up as a bunch of politicians.

There were dozens more, and *all* of them insisted on giving me candies and desserts.

By the time the two hour window for trick or treating was over, my desk was overflowing like the dessert table at my grandmother’s house at Christmas time, and Krad and I had eaten so many tasty goodies we were both sick. (I was beginning to wonder if Krad would still fit in his Loki costume.)

When I heard someone at the door I anxiously gripped my gut, but the door was thrown open and my fiancé—his hair painstakingly tousled and then covered with a tri corner hat—strolled in wearing boots, black pants, a blue coat with a leather belt and a fencing sword.

“Devin you have to help me haul all this candy downstairs for the trick-or-treaters. No one would take their candy!” I said.

“That is because human candy is inferior. If you gave out comic books I assure you they would have taken them,” Krad said.

Devin ignored us both and instead snorted with laughter. “Morgan!” he hooted as he staggered across the classroom. “Morgan, you’ll never believe it.” He had to stop talking he was laughing so hard. “Aysel...*Aysel*...” he couldn’t say more through to his velvety laughter.

“*Enough, Pooka.*”

Recognizing Aysel’s prissy but smooth-sounding voice, I looked to the classroom entrance and gaped. He was not dressed in his usual elf-lord robes, but in a similar fantasy style.

He wore a chocolate brown suede coat over an equally dark tunic paired with black pants and boots. He also had a heart-shaped gemstone necklace—not his truth spell necklace—and carried a sword that naggingly reminded me of something from a movie. Most alarming, however, was his mussed hair and the streaks of dirt that were carefully applied to his face.

He was still dazzlingly handsome even though, I realized, he was supposed to be a human—Aragorn from *Lord of the Rings*.

Someone—someone who had *a lot* of power—must have pushed him into it. It wasn't Asahi. He didn't know what Lord of the Rings was, and he had passed through an hour ago dressed as a pizza delivery guy.

As I gaped at him Aysel's fine features turned spiteful. "Silence!"

"I didn't say a word," I said.

Aysel's eyes were so narrowed they were barely visible slits. "I didn't choose to be a dirty, *stinking* human!"

Devin wiped tears from his eyes. "This is why I told you and ol' Krad to embrace the costumes—at least then you wouldn't have to wear something embarrassing."

Aysel glared at Devin in fury, but based on Krad's scrunched up face he was engraving Devin's advise to his memory.

"So...did you lose a bet?" I asked.

Aysel made a high pitched "Hmph!" noise and turned around, striding away.

"Enjoy being a *human*!" Devin nearly choked on his snicker.

I erupted into laughter.

Devin recovered long enough to say, "We have *got* to figure out what he's doing during his lunch hour!"

"For certain," I gurgled. "Now help Krad and me haul this candy downstairs."

"Anything for you, my lady love!"

Happy Halloween from the MBRC Crew