

## Committee Chaos in the Regional Committee of Magic

A Magiford Supernatural City Short Story by K. M. Shea

*Note: This story takes place an indefinite time after the events of Gate of Myth and Power*

“...And that concludes our special report.” Jade O’Neil lowered the packet of papers she clutched and bowed her head to the Regional Committee of Magic members who were all seated behind desks pushed together in a U shape.

Jade waited for a moment, but when Considine—standing next to her and openly yawning—didn’t bow, she nudged his side with her elbow.

“Hmm?” Considine made a show of tuning back in. “Yeah. Respect, groveling so you don’t cut our department budget, and what not.” He tugged on the collar of his navy-blue task force uniform.

“Thank you, Slayer O’Neil, and Elder Maledictus, for your thorough report on your department’s cases this quarter.” Elite Bellus smiled at the pair, but he seemed to be mostly speaking to Jade. “Your professionalism does credit to the Magical Response Task Force.”

“Yeah, sure,” Considine flicked his hand at the older wizard in clear dismissal. “What I want to know is why was *Jade* required to give this quarter’s report?”

“*Considine*,” Jade hissed.

“What?” Considine innocently blinked his red eyes. “It’s a valid question given that previously the Commissioner has always handled this. Also, they made us come in on our day off for this.”

“We didn’t make *you* come in,” Killian Drake—Vampire Eminence of the Midwest—drawled. “You’re here of your own volition.”

“Lies,” Considine said. “You demanded Jade make the report, knowing full well I’d join her regardless.”

Killian smirked. “Why would we do a thing like that?”

“Elder Maledictus has a point.” Alpha Grayson—the werewolf Pre-Dominant—flipped to a new page in the lined notepad he used to take notes. “How *did* Slayer O’Neil get asked to make the report on behalf of her department?”

Elite Bellus tapped away on his tablet. “It appears it was done at the request of a committee member...the form doesn’t say who.”

Queen Leila, Adept Hazel Medeis, and Pre-Dominant Greyson turned as one to stare at Eminence Killian Drake.

“What?” Killian asked. “Elite Bellus just said it doesn’t say who made the request.”

“Stop playing coy, Killian,” Considine said. “You’re not cute enough to pull that off.”

Jade, feeling that her role in the discussion was thankfully over and she should make an escape before she was pulled back in, took a step back, moving away from the committee. When no one noticed, she took another step back.

“How dare you accuse me,” Killian said lazily. “I’m offended—you can expect me to request disciplinary action from your superior.”

Considine discreetly glanced back at Jade before he continued. “You do that, and I’ll text your siblings and tell them you’re lonely and they need to visit.”

Killian narrowed his eyes. “You wouldn’t.”

“I’d normally recommend you take the argument outside,” Queen Leila looked up from her cell phone. “Except requesting Slayer O’Neil make the report is a blatant misuse of power and a waste of Cloister resources. She is a valuable employee, and we don’t want to waste her time making presentations when it would be better spent out on patrol.”

Killian rolled his eyes. “Says the committee member who is using Cloister Wi Fi to surf the internet during a committee meeting.”

“For your information I am looking up the tax deadline for businesses,” Queen Lelia said.

“Businesses?” Adept Hazel leaned forward in her chair. “Did you finally launch the Night Court merch line Greyson advised you to create?”

“No.” Queen Leila massaged her temples. “I found out a couple of fae Courts on the East coast made LLCs and haven’t reported or paid their taxes for the past five years.”

Pre-Dominant Greyson rubbed his jaw. “You should impose a fae tithe of money upon all the Courts joining your leadership for all the extra work they put you through.”

“That’s not a thing,” Queen Leila said gloomily. “Is it?”

“You’re a fae,” Killian said. “Out of everyone here *you* would most know!”

“I’m half fae, and I was raised human,” Queen Leila braced herself on her desk. “Up until a few years ago, my greatest goal in life was to avoid the attention of the fae!”

By this point Jade had managed to back up all the way to the chairs placed in meticulous rows for potential audience members.

She edged past the first row—occupied by the taciturn Charon, Ker, and Aristide who was noisily sipping what must have been blood from a thermos given his vampiric nature—and chose to sit on an open chair of the second row, a few spots away from Hunter Phillipa Sabre and King Rigel.

Pip and Rigel were ignoring the committee’s discussion and appeared to be comparing three different leather belts. Upon second glance, Jade realized they were all dagger bandoliers, and perked with interest.

“I’ve got to carry an ammunition belt, too, for my rifle, so a thigh bandolier is the way to go,” Pip said.

“That greatly limits the type of dagger you can carry,” Rigel said.

“Maybe, but a rifle is my primary weapon,” Pip said.

“Perhaps you should consider varying weapons according to your opponents,” Rigel said. “You could swap to handguns and a larger assortment of daggers for close combat—similar to what Slayer O’Neil carries.”

The pair turned together to peer at Jade, who blushed under their scrutiny. She ducked her head in a sign of respect. “King Rigel, Hunter Sabre,” she managed to say, having met the pair before at various functions Killian Drake had invited her to in an effort to get Considine to attend.

Pip grinned broadly at her. “I thought I told you at the last gala the Drakes threw to call me Pip.”

“Forgive me for interrupting this interesting deep dive into fae culture and the way their snobbery inhibits them from being dutiful citizens of the US and paying their taxes,” Considine, still standing before the committee, said. “But I would like to make it clear that Jade should *not* be called upon to give the department’s quarterly report, understood?”

Killian made a noise in the back of his throat. “I don’t know...I was personally thinking it might be good to request a task force member attend all Regional Committee of Magic

meetings in the future. Naturally, since they're held at night, the role would fall to someone on the night shift..."

Considine narrowed his eyes.

Killian chuckled, flashing his fangs. "In fact, I make a motion to do so."

"The fae oppose this motion," Queen Leila said. "As that would *still* be a waste of Cloister resources!"

Hazel stood up and planted her hands on the tables. "The wizards second this opposition!"

"No—no we don't," Elite Bellus hurried to say. "We oppose it because such a motion cannot be made since it's not on the agenda, and the Committee can only discuss items on the meeting agenda!"

"Spoil sport." Killian turned his gaze to Charon, Ker, and Aristide seated in the front row. "I don't suppose the Elven Ambassador to the Committee has any feelings about this?"

"Why are you asking us?" Aristide asked.

"Because the Elven Ambassador is unable to speak," Killian pointedly stared at the tripod set up on the desk for the designated Elven Ambassador. The tripod propped up a canvas print of King Noctus and Queen Chloe of the elves, dressed in their wedding day finery.

"Well, there's your answer," Aristide said.

Ker slapped her hand over Aristide's mouth. "What he meant to say is that the elves would naturally follow the committee's lead in this matter as they have a better understanding of the Cloister's systems and methods."

"So the committee *will not* be calling upon Jade in the future," Considine concluded. "Report over, thank you for listening, good luck with your future endeavors and boring politics." He wriggled his fingers at the committee, then strolled towards Jade. "Brunch, let's leave, before I pass away from the sheer boredom existing within the Cloister bureaucracy."

Jade shifted nervously on her chair. "Actually, I was thinking we should stay—Hazel and I arranged to grab drinks together after the meeting."

Considine planted a hand over his heart. "And you didn't invite me? My One, how could you?"

"I assumed you wouldn't notice because you'd just occupy yourself bantering with Killian," Jade said.

"*Banter?* I do not banter with Killian—I incite him, infuriate him, maybe argue with him if I am bored. I banter with *you*," Considine said.

One row up, Aristide thoughtfully tapped his cane on the ground, then popped to his feet. "Wait just a moment, Committee, before you move on."

"I beg your pardon?" Elite Bellus said, bewildered. "I apologize, but the time for members of the public to speak was at the beginning of the meeting."

"Yes, but I'm not speaking as a member of the public," Aristide said.

The Committee watched as Aristide used his cane to find the elven ambassador's desk and chair.

The blind vampire plopped down in his chair, felt for the canvas print of King Noctus and Queen Chloe and picked it up to carefully set it face down, then dramatically flung the tripod off the table. "I'm speaking as the Elven Ambassador to the committee."

"You can't be the Elven Ambassador—you're not even an elf," Elite Bellus said, taken aback.

“I’m not?” Aristide said, falsifying shock. “Charon, Ker, why didn’t you tell me? All these years of asking how I looked and if my clothes matched, and no one said a word!”

Elite Bellus folded his hands with a great deal of patience. “The Elven Ambassador speaks on behalf of the elves. It is an *official* position, not something that can be filled on a whim.”

“I like it,” Killian declared.

“Of course, you would like a vampire occupying a seat of power on behalf of another supernatural race,” Leila said, her tone withering.

“So? Greyson doesn’t have a problem with it,” Killian said.

“Correct.” Greyson said. The Alpha didn’t even look up from the notes he was taking on his yellow notepad.

“See, he’s more open minded,” Killian said.

“Not at all,” Greyson said. “Rather, I’m counting that Ker will eventually fill the Elven Ambassador seat since that role seems to be a musical-chairs assortment of the elf king’s closest friends.”

“Don’t get your wizard undies in a wad,” Aristide drawled. “I have a simple question: how does one get a topic put on the agenda for a Committee meeting?”

“Oh.” Elite Bellus—encouraged that someone was actually showing an interest in committee rules—straightened up. “The topic must be submitted to the Committee in time for the agenda to be posted publicly before the meeting, so the public can be informed about what the Committee will discuss.”

“I see,” Aristide said.

“If there is a topic you wish to discuss, you can see me after the meeting and I can give you the full procedure,” Elite Bellus said.

“What did you want to talk about?” Queen Leila—never one to wait—asked.

“It doesn’t matter because we can’t discuss it,” Elite Bellus said.

Aristide tapped his cane on the floor for emphasis. “The elves have gotten particularly interested in animal welfare and wished to suggest the possibility of the Cloisters partnering with human run and owned humane societies and shelters.”

Killian squinted. “Is this all because your queen is a cat? Because don’t think we haven’t noticed the elves are all weirdly obsessed with cats.”

“Your Eminence, that is *rude*,” Elite Bellus briskly said before smiling at Aristide with real joy. “I cannot tell you how your wish to partner with humans to support a cause brings me joy.”

“He means it would be a great PR move and we’d probably get a slew of photo ops out of it,” Hazel said.

“Adept Medeis,” Elite Bellus said, his voice pained. “Even if that is true, it behooves you not to state it so plainly.”

Considine looked from the spectacle to Jade. “You’re sure you want to stay?”

Jade nodded.

Considine sighed and slipped past her aisle seat to sit down in the open chair next to her. “I suppose it’s better than Christmas time with the Snake Brats. But we’re never doing this again!”

“I make a motion that the Department of Supernatural Law Enforcement should give monthly updates,” Killian said.

“*Eminence!* What have I said about trying to make motions for items not already on the agenda?!”

*The End*