

A Picky Pegasus
An extra scene of Angelique and Evariste
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This scene takes place after Evariste and Angelique take their leave of Snow White in the epilogue. It will be included in Angelique's story—though it might be a little modified as I had to cut some stuff to keep out spoilers. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this sneak peek into their relationship!

Angelique glided down the stairs of Glitzern palace, a smile pasted on her face—although her thoughts were not very cheery.

I believed everything would be fixed when Master Evariste was found. I could FINALLY apologize to him, and he has such strong magic that once he returned I didn't think the Chosen would stand a chance. But with his powers sealed off...

It was troubling that Lord Enchanter Evariste was unable to use his magic, but Angelique was equally bothered by Master Evariste's firm belief that no one would be able to break whatever it was that had him bound so.

Because if he was right, that meant that even though he had returned, the Chosen had still successfully shut down one of the continent's brightest beacons of hope.

Even if he cannot use his magic, he can still offer his wisdom and use his prestigious position for our advantage. But most of all, I'm just glad to have him back. Finally.

Angelique did not allow her worries to show when she joined her master in the courtyard with one of her brightest smiles. "Are you ready to call Pegasus?"

Evariste's expression was thoughtful as he lowered his gaze from the sky, to Angelique. "Actually, I have already tried."

Angelique worriedly glanced at the sky. "And he has not come?"

Evariste shook his head. "There's not a single sign of him."

Angelique's heart stuttered for a moment. Had the Chosen somehow gotten to the mythical mount? Was something keeping him out of the stars?

She pressed her lips together. "No, perhaps he just didn't hear you. I'll give it a try."

Angelique held her right hand up to the sky. "Pegasus! It is I—Enchantress-in-Training Angel—" Before she could finish, a familiar boom—not unlike thunder—echoed from the sky.

Pegasus, a spot of black on the bright blue horizon, dropped from the heavens. His mane and tail—comprised of blue flames—flared like a comet streaking through the sky. He folded his wings around him as he hit the ground—his front hooves touching the courtyard first, making the ground shake and Glitzern Palace rattle.

He landed so close to Angelique that when his wings exploded into thousands of black feathers, they smacked into her before continuing on their journey back to the sky.

Pegasus trumpeted—a loud, but high-pitched musical noise—and tossed his head.

Angelique toddled as the ground finished shaking underneath her, then fell to her knees. Before she could rise, Pegasus smacked his head into her back, itching his forehead on her shoulder blades with enough force to almost send her sprawling flat against the stone path.

"Pegasus, stop it!" Angelique struggled to her feet and was promptly yanked off balance when the mischievous equine grabbed her by the neckline of her dress and tugged—which was the equivalent of a full-grown man yanking with all of his strength.

"He seems in high spirits and good health," Evariste noted with a chuckle.

His musical voice must have drawn Pegasus's attention, for the beast turned away from Angelique long enough to give the Lord Enchanter a curious snort.

Pegasus thrust his muzzle at Evariste and breathe deeply for a few seconds before he struck the ground with his front right hoof, eliciting a spark of blue fire. He lowered his head in what could be considered a nod of acknowledgment, then made a clicking noise with his teeth as he made a grab for Angelique's hair.

"Perhaps *too* high of spirits." Angelique yanked her hair from his teeth and tried to escape, but Pegasus merely trailed after her, snorting on her skirt.

She eyed him, tempted to shout at the animal for scaring her with his delayed arrival. But Pegasus was his own master. He had lived long before Angelique and Evariste were born, and he would live long after they died. He was famously temperamental, and could not be disciplined or broken to ride like a usual horse. Not to mention, as a magical creature in his own right, he was perfectly able to stamp Angelique's life out if angered.

"He must not have heard you after all." Angelique grimaced when the starry mount snorted again, making his nostrils flare with fire.

"I very much doubt that is the case." Evariste smiled as he adjusted his hood. "Rather, it seems Pegasus has decided he now answers to you."

"Impossible!" Angelique scoffed, her brow wrinkling when Pegasus pressed his velveteen muzzle to her temple. "I met him only because of you!"

"And he only answered my summons because he owed me a favor," Evariste said. "He has no such arrangement with you. And he seems quite happy to see you."

"He carried me near everywhere I ventured while you were gone. But when I came to Mullberg in disguise, I had to send him away when King Themerysaldi came for Quinn. I think it has been roughly a month since I last saw him."

When Angelique finally squirmed far enough away from the magical beast, she turned around and offered him her palm.

Pegasus—the brat—calmly lowered his head, angling it so Angelique's palm was pressed to his cheek.

What a spoiled imp, Angelique thought wryly, though she couldn't help the fond smile that tugged on her lips as she studied the star-spattered equine.

"I suppose it is possible that he missed me, but I refuse to believe he favors me over you," she said firmly.

"I would not be so sure of that. Much has changed in my absence." Evariste's teasing smile grew.

Angelique stilled at the sight of his grin.

I never knew how much I missed him—as a person, I mean. I never knew how I wanted to see his smile again.

Pegasus took Angelique's moments of thankfulness to snort stardust on her skirt, nearly burning the fabric—the *beast!*

Angelique scowled briefly as she brushed the sparkly dust off her dress. "Regardless, Master, we still need you—perhaps more than ever before..." She glanced up, and trailed off when she found Evariste studying her with a slightly furrowed brow.

"...Is something wrong?" She ventured after a few moments of silence.

Evariste straightened. "No, nothing is wrong at all, Angel. But if Pegasus doesn't mind, we had best mount up and leave," He said, his smile returning.

"Yes...of course," Angelique said carefully.

She turned back to Pegasus, who was already lowering himself to the ground to make it easier for her to scramble onto his broad back.

If Evariste says everything is fine, it is, she told herself. I've finally gotten him back, and surely he will be able to shed light on the Chosen's movements when I take him to see Severin and Lucien.

“Are you ready for a scream-inducing ride?” Evariste teased as he slipped on behind her.

“I haven't screamed since the first time you introduced Pegasus and me,” Angelique protested as Pegasus rocked to a standing position.

But as the master and apprentice chattered, Angelique couldn't help but feel that Evariste's smile seemed tired, and perhaps a little thin...

The End