# Chapter 5: More than they Bargained for

Evariste was on top of the world. For Angel to not have pushed him away, to still want to continue their friendship, even after knowing his feelings, was already a tremendous relief. But he’d hardly dared to even *hope* she might actually return his feelings. But he could see her sincerity in her eyes -- she really loved him back!

“Evariste,” she said, “just kiss me already.”

At her words, the piece of her magic inside him flared more intensely than he’d ever felt before. At this further encouragement, he finally let go of his caution and fear -- he kissed her. She returned the kiss immediately and, somehow, his joy grew even greater, knowing she wanted this as much as he did.

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Mere moments after his lips met hers and when she’d hardly even had a chance to return his kiss, Angel felt a sudden rush of magic around Evariste and her magic flared up in response, as if excited to meet his. The shock of the sudden influx of magic caused them both to pull apart.

“The seal?! Is it really broken?”

“Yes! And I can’t tell you how good it feels to *finally* be able to just *feel* my own magic again, rather than constantly being blocked by that blasted seal. But even that pales in comparison to knowing you love me back, Angel! I meant what I said, that you’re far more important to me than my magic.”

She smiled at him. “I feel the same way, Evariste. I can’t tell you how important you are to me, how much I missed you all those years you were gone. How much I missed your kindness, your generosity, your laugh. Heck, I even missed your ridiculous insistence on calling Stil our child!”

He laughed. “So we’re still arguing about that, after all this time? Can’t you just accept that I’m right?”

She snorted. “About that? Never. It will always be ridiculous.”

He pulled her close again and she melted into him, the two of them standing in comfortable silence.

“It is strange though,” he mused.

“What is?”

“Your magic, the piece of it that stayed with me. I would’ve thought it would have returned to you now that I can access my own magic again. But I can still feel it. It’s still there, at the wellspring of my magic.”

Angel furrowed her brow. “That is strange, but I’m not sure it’s any stranger than it staying with you in the first place.”

“True. It’s almost like how the Snow Queen managed to disconnect her magic from herself and have it act independently.”

“But I didn’t purposely disconnect a piece of my magic from me. I just sent a tracking spell. I mean, I’m glad it did stay with you, since it was able to give you some protection and comfort, but I even didn’t know it had happened until you told me.”

“Hmm…then perhaps it’s not entirely disconnected from you after all. Why don’t you see if you can still sense it and control it?”

She paused and focused on her awareness of her magic. Now that she was specifically looking for it, she *could* feel a piece of it inside the swirl of Evariste’s magic. She pulled on it gently, not wanting to risk causing any harm to Evariste. It followed her command, but almost… reluctantly? It was as if it wantedto stay with Evariste, wanted to *protect* him.

At this realization, something inside her unwound. She had already come a long way in accepting that her core magic could be used for good -- she’d certainly not have been able to rescue Evariste from that damned mirror without it. But a part of her had still feared it, still held back from fully accepting it. But how could she fail to accept a force that sought to protect the one person who meant more to her than anyone else?

Voice trembling, she said, “It…it wants to stay with you. To protect you.”

“Angel? Are you alright? You don’t need to leave it with me for my sake. If it scares you to not have it in your control, take it back.”

“No, it’s not that. It’s just…it’s like it just hit me suddenly that my core magic really *is* a magic of protection, that it really *does* seek to protect, not to harm.”

Evariste smiled. “I’m happy for you, that you’re coming to see your magic --”, he cut off as their magics suddenly flared up. Looking down, they saw that their magics were mixing and intertwining -- not just the small piece of Angel’s magic that had stayed with Evariste, but *all* the magic swirling around them.

“What is *happening*?!” Angel immediately stood upright. “This…this should be impossible! A piece of my magic staying with you was already impossibly strange. But this -- this is -- I don’t even know *what* this is!”

“Hmm,” Evariste mused, eyes narrowed and brow furrowed. “It certainly is unprecedented. But perhaps not quite as unexpected as you might think.”

“What do you mean? This goes against the very foundations of magical theory!”

“Perhaps it’s less about the magic than it is about *us*.” He raised an eyebrow.

“Evariste!” Angel growled. “Stay on topic! We need to figure out what the heck is going on here! This is exactly the sort of reason I’ve always thought romance was inappropriate in all these crazy situations!” She deliberately took a step away from him.

Now he was raising both eyebrows at her and grinning. “I seem to recall *you* being the one to initiate that conversation. And the one who insisted I kiss you.”

She flushed bright red. “I didn’t know what you were going to say when I brought it up.”

“Didn’t you?”

*Take a deep breath Angel. Turning Evariste into a frog isn’t going to get us any closer to solving this.*

“Ugh, Evariste, we’re getting completely sidetracked here! We really do need to figure out what the heck is going on.”

Before he could respond, their intertwined magic turned incredibly bright and began flaring up around Evariste, giving off a sense of protectiveness towards him.

*What the heck?!!!!??*

“Well, this is unexpected,” Evariste said.

Angel spluttered. “Unexpected?! This is *beyond* unexpected! This is utterly *absurd*! It should be *impossible*. It makes *no sense*! How can you be so calm about it?!!”

Another voice chimed in. “What’s going on here? We could see that flare of magic half-way across the palace.”

Startled, Angel whirled to face Emerys. “When did you get here?!”

He smirked. “In time to see this…whatever this is.” He gestured to the magic surrounding both their feet and shielding Evariste. “I take it you two finally had your talk and broke Evariste’s seal?”

“Yes,” Evariste said. “Although it seems we got more than we bargained for in doing so.”

Angel had *enough* with this whole situation. It was all too confusing and ridiculous and Evariste was being way too calm about it. And now Emerys suddenly butting in and acting equally calm…it was just too much. She couldn’t help it -- she burst out laughing at the sheer absurdity of it all. Soon, Evariste was laughing with her.