The Stapler Thief

by WauryD

Summary

Jaime has a bit too much time on his hands one evening while shelving books, and Brienne gets caught in his entertainment.

Notes

As far as I know, most public libraries in the occidental countries work with the Dewey Decimal Classification system, which classifies documents according to subject and how those subjects are approached. Those subjects are represented by a 3-digit number, often followed by a decimal point and more numbers to precise the topic.

The hierarchy I used for this fic is as follows:

Librarian: administration and acquisitions
Library technician: cataloging and reference
Clerk: shelving, checkout, quick help to patrons

This is how a lot of libraries work where I live (I have a library technician diploma), so yeah. Enjoy :D

See the end of the work for more notes
Jaime watched her accompany a customer to the new arrivals display with amused green eyes. He had been hanging around her desk all evening, which she couldn't even really fault him for: the night had been pretty quiet, and he seemed to have done most of his tasks already.

Brienne offered the customer, a greying, middle aged man, their newest book on infectious diseases, before returning to the reference desk, where Jaime suspiciously attempted to look inconspicuous.

She had had her position for two months when he'd started hanging out at the small library, in a quiet suburb of Lannisport. His face was pretty famous, golden hair and golden skin and emerald green eyes, for his family’s business as well as for the accident that had forced a prosthetic hand on his right arm. Heads had turned on his path, not that he had seemed to pay them any mind.

He had come to her desk at first looking for a book on bears, and after a few questions, Brienne had directed him to 599.784 - brown bears.

His next visit, he had asked for documents on precious gems. She gave him directions to 553.

He had shown up every couple of days since, asking various questions about their newest acquisitions, about her training, about the library’s rules and procedures. It had become a bit suspicious, until her supervisor, Catelyn, officially introduced him as their newest volunteer.

There was no reason for him to do that. Clearly, if he was able to spend as many as twenty hours of his week working for free, chances were, he might not even need to work at all. The Lannisters were charitable, yes, but with money, not with their time.

It was suspicious.

He was surprisingly efficient, too. Brienne would not have pegged him for a people person, but he acquitted himself of customer service tasks with pleasant smiles and remarkable patience. There had been many instances of patrons overtly flirting with him, still leaving with a disappointed but heart-eyed sigh when he politely declined their invitations.

Even with that attitude, she had expected him to rail against visitors at the first occasion, but he never did. He had no issue taking the time to talk to children about his missing hand, through the profuse apologies from the parents. He genuinely attempted to help people coming to him with questions, before directing them to Brienne if he couldn't provide answers.

She had attempted to hate him, if only for the incessant teasing he subjected her to during his downtime, but it had failed miserably. He was charming, disgustingly so at times, and she saw through it all; but he seemed to be a genuinely good person, even if he seemed to revel in every opportunity he had to make her blush furiously.

For his defence, it was a bit too easy. The attention of someone that attractive would make any normal-looking person shy. For someone with as an unconventional appearance as Brienne, it was nearly paralyzingly at first.

She was a bit taller than him, despite his six-foot height; and almost bulkier. He seemed to love mocking the freckles that covered every visible patch of skin - and so much more - though he had been extremely quick to tell off a rude patron who made a comment on them. That didn't make her features any less attractive, but at least she knew - or hoped - that he didn't mean to insult her.

“What are you trying to steal?” The day had been long, and she returned to her desk wearily. That
was the new target of his amusement, as of the past few shifts: taking things from her station to see if she’d notice. She always did.

He looked like a guilty child with a mocking grin. “Your heart?”

Damn it. She fought the blush in vain, extending a hand. “That was almost smooth, Jaime. Hand me the stapler.”

“I did manage to take your breath away, though,” he teased, pressing the tool in her hand. “That is smooth.”

She shook her head, watching him walk back to the checkout counter. He seemed to be enjoying himself a bit too much.

The rest of the evening passed quickly enough, as she finished cataloging a few new documents: Melisandre’s newest album, a fantasy encyclopedia on dragons, a romance novel set in the Dothraki Sea, and a detective thriller about a spy movie. She made note to show it to Jaime when he would reappear, as she noticed his absence from his station.

He was back by the time she stood to go and lock the doors, confirming that he had made the rounds to ensure no patron remained in the building. “Yes, even the restrooms,” he assured her, like every time. Closing together was nothing out of the ordinary, and he had been quick to learn her routine.

Brienne printed the day’s reports from her computer, while Jaime prepared him own at the checkout counter. She absentmindedly reached for her stapler to finalize her document, only to grab at empty space. Looking down, she saw a very bright, very pink sticky note that had “STAPLER” written on it.

Jaime was intently staring at his screen when she turned to glare at him, but his wild grin indicated that he had missed nothing of her discovery. When he ignored her throat-clearing, she walked over.

“Jaime. Where’s my stapler?”

“I don’t know, Brienne. Where did you leave it?”

“Look.” She stuck the pink note to his forehead. “I want to go home. I’m tired. Where’s my stapler?”

He looked at her with an amused expression that fared nothing good. Taking the bright paper from his face, he turned it around, showing her more scribbles on its back: “material management - offices”.

She stared at him blankly.

“What’s the call number for that?”

Oh. No. “I am not going on a treasure hunt in the alleys.”

He flashed her that stupid pleading smile. “Come on. It’s Thursday. You’re not working tomorrow. It won’t take long and it’s worth it, I promise.”

Brienne wanted to ask why, but at that point, getting it over with would be quicker. “658-something. Point five or seven,” she sighed. He invited her to precede him to the stacks with flourish, and she proceeded with a roll of the eyes.

She had hoped, without much illusion, that it would be the end of it. But no. On a shelf that hosted
books on material management in offices - 658.7 - sat a book on swords.

“623,” she said automatically, looking down the alley.

“Ah ah,” he interjected, “that would be too easy. Pick it up.”

Brienne did as told, getting irritated. Another sticky note jutted off the back cover, this time neon yellow. It had a crude drawing of an armour. She shot him a questioning look.

“Please try.”

Ugh. “A knight? Fairytales?” His expression suggested that it wasn’t far off, but not quite there yet. “Medieval times?”

He beamed at her, and she started her way to the history section. At 909, a book on precious gems at in plain view - the very same she’d found for him months before, she noted. A quizzical glance, but he simply shrugged. The book’s call number was 553.8, and when he didn’t offer more directions, she marched to the designated shelf.

“You said it wouldn’t be long,” she chided, discovering yet another misplaced book. He seemed way too proud of himself.

It was a romance novel, with a rather suggestive cover, and she quickly looked away from it after picking it up, knowing a blush would definitely follow regardless. She was suddenly getting pretty fed up with the game, and Jaime seemed to find that rather amusing.

“You know where that goes,” he teased, all smiles.

“Up your - “

“Come on, you’re a librarian!”

“I’m a library tech, Jaime, and shelving books is for clerks, like you.” That was unfair, she knew, it was a crucial part of library services: misplaced documents meant lost documents. Patrons needed to be able to find the information they sought, and the clerks’ job, though assumed easy and mundane, was vital.

Besides, she did help with it whenever she had some downtime.

None of it deterred Jaime, though she seemed to detect some light uncertainty behind his cocksure assurance.

He better have good reasons, she thought with a glare, turning around to find the fiction section.

The documents were organized by author here, and she found the spot for the one she was holding easily enough - Payne - and discovered, confused, a guide to Lannister’s best restaurants. She had gone through it a few times in the past weeks, when a lull in her work allowed her to scour the new acquisition display.

A blue sticky note enjoined her to choose among its contents.

“The Golden Lion,” she said out loud, without even picking up the book. It was the one she had found most appealing, though its prices would have her save up for it for a few months before she was able to visit. Which was just as well, because the reservation wait was endless.

One would have thought it was the Winter Festival come early, the way Jaime looked at her. He
silently waved to the book, which she picked up with a sigh, flipping the pages to the one she knew detailed the Lion’s offers.

Another blue note was stuck just under the restaurant name, with a date and a time. “Friday, 7PM,” she read with a frown, looking back up at Jaime in confusion.

“If you’re free,” he offered when she didn’t say anything else.

“I - “

“Please don’t argue that you can’t afford it, because obviously it’s my treat, and it would just be embarrassing for both of us if you to brought it up.” he added quickly with a mock-serious expression. She glared at him, only to receive a genuine smile in return.

“Why?”

He looked at his feet at the question, even managing to look slightly bashful when he met her eyes again. “Because I enjoy teasing you, and I’d really like an uninterrupted evening full of it,” he replied mischievously, and Brienne realized that she probably looked like a disapproving mother as she shook her head.

They were both silent for a moment, and he sounded slightly desperate when he pleaded for a positive answer. “Please?”

He seemed sincere, she thought, trying to quell her hopes. That might end very badly. But...

“I’m going to be ordering their most expensive cut of meat,” she warned. He better not assume she would meekly eat salad.

Jaime grinned happily at that, while she placed the romance novel back in its place and started to make her way back to the front desks. “I wouldn't expect anything less from you,” he purred in her ear, walking after her.

They finished closing the library in pleasantly tense silence, a smile plastered on his face the whole time. “I’ll pick you up at 6,” he announced as she locked the doors behind him.

“I thought you said 7,” she asked with a frown.

“Well that’s the dinner reservation. We’re going for drinks before,” he explained as if it was entirely obvious. “I mean, it’s a date, we have to do it properly,” he beamed at her.

Brienne couldn’t find anything to reply to that, staring at him speechless. That seemed to be a satisfactory answer for him, and he kissed her cheek quickly, before sauntering away.

“What dress...? Jaime! What dress?!”

She watched him leave, trying to process what had just happened. He was out of sight when it hit her.

End Notes
The stapler was forgotten, and never found again. The End.

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