Ra-pans-el

by EliMorgan

Summary

Pansy Parkinson is stuck in a tower, fending off the advances of god-awful knights who all seem to think she needs 'saving'. Which, she does. Just... not by them.

Notes

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Written for the Bingo event in Marvelously Magical Fanfiction, to fill my "She needed a hero, so that's what she became" - anonymous' square. I don't know if this is a conventional, or even proper use of the prompt, but... I mean, everything else went dark and I just wasn't feeling dark today.

Enjoy my weirdness!

Eli x
“Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair!”

“Sod off, you great, bumbling prick!” Pansy shouted out of the window, braiding her hair a foot at a time.

“But I'm here to save you!” her unwitting suitor replied in a puzzled tone. “I shall climb up your hair and free you from your decrepit tower!”

Frowning, Pansy took a look around her tower room. It was exactly her style, all French antiques and sunny shades of wood, the walls a cool blue. To describe it as *decrepit* was simply offensive. She turned to peer out of the window at the knight below - oh, you could make them in a factory and they'd be less cookie-cutter identikit than they were; blonde hair, blue eyes, sword a-blazing as if they were here to fight a dragon and not the simple lack of a door. Rolling her eyes, she pulled back. “Go away!”

The Knight scowled, perturbed by this less than receptive response. “Just let down your hair!”

“What, so you can try to climb it? Where's the logic? It is attached to my head, you know. Can you say, ‘ouch’?” Pansy threw her hands up in despair. “Knights!”

Said knight grumbled unflatteringly under his breath. “Well how else am I to come up there?”

“You're not meant to. You're meant to be getting me down there.” She gestured to the ground. “Didn't you bring a broomstick?”

“Why would I bring a broomstick?” He asked, completely confused.

“So I could fly it, obviously. Honestly, where do they find you lot? Hopeless, the lot of you. Bloody Muggles. If you're not going to help, sod off!”

The Knight finally slammed his hands onto his hips with a great clanking and creaking of armour. “I'm starting to think you're more trouble than you're worth,” he shouted petulantly.

“Well of course I am,” Pansy replied reasonably. “Why else would I be in a tower?”

The Knight gave some more incoherent, angry mumbling then eventually clattered off, leaving Pansy in peace. Well, peace enough, after she'd shouted “and it's Ra-Pans-al, actually!” at his back.

It was a pain, this - since she'd *(voluntarily!!!)* moved into the tower shortly after the war ended, every week or so some idiot with a sword would come bumbling by and attempt to save her from her life of solitude (because obviously a woman can't possibly want to be without a man. What sort of garbage was that?). That was funny, for the first few months. She'd watch them and snicker and wait for them to realise how futile their efforts were and wander off to find some other fairy tale to be incompetent at.

*Then* she'd happened to run across Ginny Weasley, which, by the way, was the reason she'd ostracised herself in the first place: the Wizarding World held a grudge (you offer up the Chosen One to a Dark Lord *one time* and that's all you're ever remembered for), so the safest place she could have been was in a tower. Far away from the lot of them.

The Weaselette only proved the wisdom of that decision. Pansy had only left the tower to collect some herbs for a stew, and the next thing she'd known, she was back, the door was gone and
Weasel-bitch was blathering on about how it could only be entered from the outside and whoever did it had to be pure of heart or solve a riddle or fight a dragon or climb a fucking tree; Pansy wasn't sure, admittedly she'd tuned out after a while, the girl did tend to ramble. In short, the only way she was leaving was if a bloke was clever enough to try the door.

Which, by the way, none of them ever had.

That, or if she bewitched some poor sod into bringing her a broomstick. It would be much easier if she had been the Dark Witch everyone thought she was since a quick *imperio* could hide a multitude of sins, but as her only crime had, in fact, been a very slytherin sense of self preservation, it seemed she was stuck.

On the upside, at least she'd managed to grow out that hideous bob. And then some. She stared at the coil of hair she sat in, as thick and deep as any armchair. Once she'd fully committed to the fairy tale, it had grown and grown and just kept growing. And it was strong, too - if she fancied it, the knights probably *could* climb the thing.

Not that she’d let them.

She was distracted from her thoughts by a buzzing noise, which brought her back to the window. A blob of red disrupted the horizon, zooming closer with a plume of grey smoke spiralling out of its behind. Cocking her head, she realised that it was a man. A man in a red-and-gold suit.

Well, this was a new one on her.

She watched the metal contraption - surely the nicest suit of armor so far - twist and seize in the air as it came close, before suddenly plummeting into the side of her tower with a great *crash*. Pansy reflexively threw out a cushioning charm as it dropped to the hard ground below, sending it bouncing comically before it finally came to a stop.

The face plate released with an ominous *clack*, revealing a bruised and sooty face. Out of habit, Pansy scanned the man beneath, grateful to see that *this* one was a brunette. Truly, after spending half her life watching Draco fail at one thing or the other, and then those blasted knights, she'd lost all faith in the fair of hair.

She spent a few minutes watching him, waiting for him to leap to his feet and come to her rescue. All he seemed to be doing, however, was struggling to breathe.

At length, she sighed and decided to prompt him.

““Well?” she shouted. “Aren't you meant to be saving me?”

He blinked up at her, squinting in the sun. “FRIDAY, who's that?”

Pansy tutted. He was cute, from what she could see of his swollen face, but obviously a bit concussed. *If* he had even been sane to begin with, which she wouldn't bet on, given how he was wearing a giant robot. “I'm Pansy. PANSY.”

He waved a hand, or tried to anyway, but the arm went haywire, spitting blue sparks and whining like Granger when she got mad. “That's not good,” he said loudly.

“Why don't you just get out of it?” she said. “Then you might be able to fix it. And, while you're at it, get me out of this tower. That thing can fly, right?”

Whoever it was shot her a droll look. “It *could* fly,” he remarked mildly, “before it had a run in with
“She doesn’t like strangers,” Pansy said defensively. “Can’t you just, I don’t know, punch out the dents?” She’d seen a Knight do that, once. Impressive. She’d almost liked that one.

The man inside blew a raspberry, or maybe he just breathed loudly, it was hard to tell. “Punch out the dents?!”

“Well it can’t be that hard,” Pansy shrugged.

“If it’s not that hard, why don’t you do it?” he demanded obnoxiously.

This was becoming tiresome. “Because, if you’d cared to assess the situation, you’d see I’m locked in a tower. There is no door.”

The man wrinkled his nose, turning his head marginally as he finally looked around. He scoffed. “Call that a tower? It’s three feet off the ground!”

“And yet you still managed to crash into it,” she pointed out snippily.

He paused, open mouthed, and tried to think his way out of that. Pansy watched the thoughts flick over his face as he did so, then smirked when he sighed. “I feel like we got off on the wrong foot. I’m Tony Stark.” He smiled charmingly, as if she was meant to know what that meant. It faded when he caught the quizzical look on hers. “And you are?” he asked finally, as if it were an afterthought.

“Pansy Parkinson,” she replied. “Or, Rapansel.” She elongated the last word theatrically, complete with batting of eyelashes and sweet contemplation of the heavens or whatever Princesses were meant to do.

He narrowed his eyes. “That’s the worst pun I’ve ever heard, and I live with Barton.”

Stung, and somewhat bewildered (what in Merlin’s name was he on about? She was becoming increasingly concerned for his mental health), Pansy scowled fiercely. “Well are you going to save me or not?”

“Little busy here, if it’s all the same to you.” As if on cue, his leg plate fell off and he cursed foully.

“Bollocks to this,” she snapped. Honestly, men were incompetent. Nobody was opening that door, and besides, now there was a bloke outside, possibly dying. And since he was quite fit, even if that goatee was a bit creepy, she thought that would be a waste. So, here she was, deciding she’d just have to save herself. And maybe him too, if she didn’t get tired of the whole ‘hero’ thing before she had chance.

“I’m coming down!” she declared.

Now she just had to figure out how.

A glance about showed how unwise her interior decoration choices were; she’d long bemoaned her lack of foresight in not buying a ladder, but looking now at the flimsy chairs and tables, she regretted not buying the metal shit that Muggle had tried to flog her. At least they had been sharp.

She settled on a dinner knife for lack of other options, and sat back by the window to saw at her hair. It was a long job, made more so since she had to keep an eye on the dying robot outside, but at least she had company.
He was quite funny, too. Irritating, but people had been known to say that about her so she didn't hold it against him. Plus, though she suspected he was a bit short, his robot shell was ripped as Hades and she'd started to hope that it reflected the real thing.

If it did, and she saved him, she might get the chance to lick it, so, you know.

*Priorities.*

She managed to cut it all off in about an hour, making good time, especially after she remembered that slicing charms existed and perhaps she was being just a wee bit melodramatic by hacking at it with cutlery. In the same vein, magic bound it into a thick rope, and stuck it to the floor, and launched it from the window.

Really, it was so easy, she couldn't think why she hadn't done it months ago.

Two steps into climbing down, the reason became apparent: a complete and utter lack of upper body strength.

Still, she was committed now. She'd look a fool if she turned back.

“You look ridiculous,” Stark said, because, as she pointed out - *irritating*. “Didn't you ever learn to climb a rope at school?”

“Like you did,” she replied - a bit wheezily, if she was honest. “Mr. University-At-Fifteen. Didn’t I tell you how I loathe over achievers?”

“College,” Stark corrected her.

“I'm British. It's University.”

“I'm American, it's College.”

Pansy turned to glare at him, which was a mistake, because she lost her grip and slid down a few feet, letting out a piercing shriek as she desperately tried to hold on and burnt her palms in the process. Her life flashed before her eyes, she could swear it; every dumb joke, every hex, every hilarious repartee - she saw it all as she waited for the splat that would end her…

She came to an abrupt stop as her hands caught the rope, the rushing wind she heard in her head giving way to a rasping laugh. Unable to keep from gripping the rope for dear life, she kept her legs curled tight around it, vowing never to let go of this life giving tool.

“Pansy,” Stark spluttered through his laughter. “Pansy, let go.”

“What, are you trying to *kill me* ?!” she shrieked, clinging to her hair. “No!”

That triggered another gale of laughter, if somewhat short due to the crushed metal on Stark’s torso. “Okay, okay, then at least open your eyes!”

“They are open!” she said crossly, only to immediately realise that they were closed. She'd thought she was simply blinded due to her imminent death, but apparently not. Who knew?

It took a moment to convince her eyes that sight did not immediately equal falling to her death, and then she found herself staring at a spider climbing the wall of her tower. Well. That was not pleasant, but infinitely better than a one-on-one with Hades, so she’d take it.

“Now look down,” Stark coaxed.
Biting back a sassy remark, she took a deep breath, and-

Oh.

“There you go,” he said approvingly as she hopped off the end of her hair-ladder and dropped the two feet to the ground. “No Rapunzel here, then.”

Pansy brushed a hand through her shorn hair and grinned. “How do I look?”

“Like a mental patient,” Stark informed her sweetly.

Looking back up at the window, she shrugged, curling her toes in the grass. “Worth it.” She took a deep breath of fresh air - and gagged.

Same air as she had in her tower, only this was full of the toxic fumes of man/robot-crushed-on-the-ground-and-leaking-oil. And smoking from his arse.

“Don’t you know that smoking’s bad for you,” she smirked, taking a few uneven steps over to him. The suit seemed much bigger up close, and less shiny, too. All dirty and crumpled. With a wrinkle of her nose, she flicked her wand. Immediately, her magic short-circuited it, triggering a yowling cry from the man trapped inside as it shut off and sparks flew. He glared at her as she smirked even wider.

“There’s a reason you were stuck in that tower, isn’t there,” he said accusingly, and she chuckled.

“Cleverest knight to date,” she remarked, patting his cheek with considerable condescension. “You’ll go far, kid.”

“Right,” he rolled his eyes downwards towards his armour. “Can you get me out now?”

Pansy tapped her chin slowly, feeling free and warm and entirely playful. “Oh, I don’t know. Maybe if you ask nicely.”

He rolled his eyes, then flailed a bit, an action she could only recognise because his face swivelled in his helmet, bunching his cheeks up until they were all pudgy like a chipmunk’s. “Ra pans el, Ra pans el, get me the fuck out of here!”

“Now that’s more like it,” Pansy grinned. She kicked the side, where a tiny mark pointed inwards, and with a hissing of hydraulics the whole front lifted up and outwards, revealing the man inside.

Merlin, he was short.

Still pretty hot, though.

“My hero,” Stark snarked with an irony she couldn’t quite understand. Didn’t matter. She was free, she was free, and -

Eyeing him up as he got to his feet, she noticed that the suit wasn’t entirely wishful thinking. “I’m pretty new to this whole saviour thing,” she said slowly, unashamedly raking her eyes up his body as he stretched, his shirt pulling up to bare his stomach, “but don’t heroes usually get thanks?”

“Thank you? I’m so grateful.” Stark said sardonically.

Pansy licked her lips and leered. “Prove it.”
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