Nailing and Screwing

by Monkess

Summary

Repeating litanies on Tumblr prompted: After years of captivity, Belle insists on sleeping in the greenhouse. Rumpelstiltskin makes it his mission to ensure she is comfortable.

This means a trip to Storybrooke Hardware and Paint store!

Notes

Warning: Attempts at humour inside.

Storybrooke Hardware and Paint store was on the high street, but was far less frequently open since after the Curse of Storybrooke had broken and the citizens of the town had recovered their true memories and personalities. Bernard Coleman, or Happy as he preferred to go by, was still the proprietor of Hardware and Paint, even though he and his co-worker Dopey (who had stopped going by Jeffrey Tate) now spent most of his waking hours in the mines underneath the town, digging for the diamonds that would turn into fairy dust under the dwarves’ pick axes.

But, lacking curse or not, Storybrooke citizens also still occasionally needed hardware supplies, and so Dopey and Happy would keep the Hardware and Paint open three or four hours most late afternoons or evenings.

One evening, Happy Bernie was going through the last week’s sales receipts at the counter, while Dopey Jeffrey was doing inventory around the shop. Happy was lost in thought, thinking about how money worked in the Land Without Magic. When he’d been a dwarf in the Enchanted
Forest, most of the currency he’d ever used was strictly based on bartering goods. Eggs and nails for ale at the pub. There had been metal coins, but their value had been based solely on how easily you could melt them into nails or something useful. There was none of this paper money – Happy glanced at the till, where the mysterious green cash resided and then returned his attention to receipts. Storybrooke citizens had bought shovels, fire alarms, and heh, nails.

Someone moved in Happy Bernie’s peripheral vision and he assumed it was Dopey Jeffrey, since they were alone in the shop.

"What do you think about this Adam Smith economy? When we get back to the Enchanted Forest, how much will a dollar be worth?" Happy asked.

"Absolutely nothing," said a voice which made Happy’s skin crawl. His hands with the stacks of receipts froze too, as he slowly looked up and saw Rumplestiltskin, or Mr Gold, was staring at him on the other side of the counter.

There was an awkward silence when Happy forgot how to speak for a moment. As a backbone reaction caused by the curse, Bernard Coleman was much more frightened of Mr Gold than Happy was of Rumplestiltskin, and Bernard Coleman was the one that made Happy want to cringe and keep his mouth shut, even though Happy would have preferred to try and be civil with the terrible sorcerer. Happy was after all, Happy.

For another second, Mr Gold seemed like he was expecting a response, but when none came, he placed a hand-written list on the counter in front of Happy.

"I need everything on his list," Mr Gold stated.

Slowly recovering, Happy nodded. As soon as he wasn’t looking straight at Rumplestiltskin, he found it much easier to return to the present. Happy reached out for the list and brought it a little closer to glance through.

There was heat insulation materials, outdoors electric extension cords. Nothing on the list seemed like materials for another Dark Curse, although of course with Rumplestiltskin one couldn’t be too certain, but Happy was inclined this time to believe the better of him.

"Sure, no problem," Happy said, keeping his eyes on the list. "Do you want to wait here or…?"

Then the store door opened and inside, with breath of autumn chill, came the odd librarian, Grumpy’s friend Belle. Happy couldn’t help but smile happily at the woman clad in bright autumn colours of red, orange and yellow.

"Sorry if I’m late, got carried away in the library," was the first thing Belle said, approaching Rumplestiltskin. Then she greeted Happy with the same friendly smile Happy remembered from a couple of evenings spent at Granny’s, celebrating small victories in the process of getting the diamonds extracted from the mines.

"Hello Happy, how are you?" Belle asked, and Happy knew it was more than out of casual politeness. Probably it was a subtle way of asking if her monstrous boyfriend had already harassed him.

"Fine, great. Work goes well down in the mines," Happy said assuringly, although there was a slight, tense edge of nerves in his voice.
"I’ve never been here before!” Belle exclaimed, looking around at the hardware store. "Do you mind if I look around?" She asked, more from Rumplestiltskin than from Happy, although she spared a brief glance at his way too.

"Whatever amuses you, darling,” Rumplestiltskin said. Belle took off with him down the first corridor.

Happy took a shopping basket from next to the counter and set off to retrieving everything on the list. He found Dopey from between the shelves where he was sitting, counting how many bags of flat hooks they had.

"The Dark One and his girlfriend on a shopping spree?” Dopey asked, glancing at Happy as he walked past.

"Seems like it,” Happy replied, and went to get the garden LED lights down the isle into his pile of stuff. He happened to be on the other side of the shelves from across their only two customers, as he suddenly found out when he heard them talking on the nailing and screwing alley.

"How about that?” Happy heard Belle’s voice, questioning.

"But what are you going to do with it?” Asked Rumplestiltskin, sounding unusually mellow.

"Learn how to use it!” Belle said, enthusiastic. "What if I suddenly find myself in a situation where I need to know how to use power tools?”

He moved on to aisle three for his next item on the list.

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