

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: Constantine makes a call.

-x-X-x-

For a long moment, Constantine is tempted to just... let it go. Maybe he could find a half-decent park bench to pass out on. It wouldn't be the first time and he highly suspected it wouldn't be the last either.

The only problem with that was he wasn't even sure where the nearest park was. This part of town was kind of crappy... no, scratch that, it was downright shitty. His work took him into downright shitty places all the time though, so it wasn't really anything new.

Of course, normally he had a key that let him turn any door into a gateway into his extradimensional abode, so it wasn't a problem. Sure, he'd only had ownership of the House of Mystery for a few years... but damn if he hadn't gotten used to it being an ever-present escape from everything.

“Fuck me...”

Groaning and running a hand down his face, Constantine moves away from the door he'd been intending to use. Given he doesn't have the key, the door is just another locked door to some warehouse, so there's no point in standing in front of it uselessly.

Instead, he makes his way down the street and finds a good spot to 'place a call' so to speak. He doesn't actually own a smartphone... or even a dumb phone, truth be told. But that's okay because he can always use his magic to get in touch with the right person.

Not fifteen minutes later, the sound of a boom tube lets him know that she got his message and has arrived. Zatanna Zatara steps out into view with a hand on her impressively shapely hip and a raised brow. Constantine tries not to stare

too much at her fishnet clad legs... normally he wouldn't bother restraining himself, but in this case he sort of needs her help.

"Hey Zatanna. Thanks for coming."

Huffing, Zatanna looks around, taking in their surroundings before turning her gaze back to him.

"... What is it John? What do you need?"

Ouch. He can practically taste the ex-girlfriend in her tone. To be fair, it's not like Zatanna is the only woman he's ever lost to his own numerous flaws and inadequacies. Not by a long shot. But she's probably one of the best of them... as evident by the fact that she still answers his calls even after their breakup. But then, Zatanna is a good egg. Always has been.

"Was hoping I might be able to crash up in the Watchtower. Just for the night."

That draws a blink from the other magic user. See, Constantine wasn't a member of the Justice League. He was at best a consultant from time to time. However, if he could get permission from an actual member of the League, they would let him stay in one of the Watchtower's numerous guest quarters. It was his best shot at getting an actual bed for the evening, considering he was flat broke.

"... Why would you need that? You have the House of Mystery, don't you?"

Zatanna peers at him suspiciously, continuing on before Constantine can reply.

"You don't have another Lord of Hell gunning for you at the moment, do you? Because the last time you stayed at the Watchtower, we were dealing with a demonic incursion within the hour. If I let something like that happen again, I might be saying goodbye to MY membership of the League."

Constantine grimaces, shaking his head.

“No Zee, it isn’t anything like that. I don’t have anyone after me... not any more than usual anyways.”

That last qualifier was necessary because they both knew that John Constantine had enemies and that they were more numerous than most. But still, today had only been a normal somewhat shitty day... it hadn’t been *that bad*.

Well, at least not until about a half hour ago.

“The House is gone, Zee. Someone fucking stole it from me. Or it just decided it hates me and wants nothing to do with me. Can’t pull the key out, so can’t get access anymore.”

Zatanna’s eyes widen and her mouth drops.

“John... you *lost* the House of Mystery?!”

See, this was why finding a park bench was such a tempting idea. Constantine winces at Zatanna’s shrill voice, even as he raises his hands in a placating motion.

“It’s not like I had any choice in the matter, Zatanna! I literally slept there last night. Had the key and everything this morning. But here I am, after a pretty long fucking day, and when I reach for it... there’s nothing there.”

Zatanna grimaces, crossing her arms over her chest and stepping forward.

“Show me.”

Then, she casts a quick spell that has her eyes glowing bright. Constantine groans... but does as he’s told, reaching into his pocket and doing everything he can to will the big iron key to the House of Mystery into existence.

Just like before, nothing happens. It’s not that he’s being blocked or ignored or anything like that... but rather, it’s more like there’s no connection at all

anymore. Whatever had happened, whoever had done this if it wasn't the House itself... had severed his claim completely.

It was an immutable fact of the universe at this point. Water was wet. Karens were annoying. And John Constantine was no longer the owner of the House of Mystery.

After a long moment of trying everything he possibly can under Zatanna's watchful glowing eyes, Constantine finally stops and gives her a simple raised brow. Zatanna curses under her breath and steps back, though her arms remain crossed over her chest. Shame that, it was one of her best features, alongside her legs and ass and... fuck, he really needed to get laid soon didn't he?

"Great. So not only do we have a Lord of Order running around and some demon turning laundromat owners inside out, but now the House of Mystery has fucked off to who knows where and could have fallen under the control of who knows what. Just... fantastic."

Grimacing, Constantine resists the urge to once again point out that this wasn't his fault. To her credit, Zatanna hadn't blamed him directly this time after all. Rather, she'd simply... been ranting. Although, some of what she'd just said was a bit alarming. Specifically the first part. Demons turning laundromat owners inside out was pretty par for the course.

"What was that about a Lord of Order 'running around'?"

Zatanna sighs and explains what's happened in the last couple days. Suffice to say, Constantine isn't happy.

"Holy shit... the sort of magic one would need to clean a New York City Street to that degree is... astronomical."

Zatanna gives him a singularly unimpressed look.

"Not to mention taking down Chemo."

Constantine just waves her off though.

“Right, right. Chemo too. Whatever. But what if its all tied together? What if whoever stole my House is involved in what you’re dealing with?”

Another grimace spreads across Zatanna’s face and the words slip out of her mouth under her breath before she can stop them.

“... fuck I hope not.”

Constantine understands he wasn’t supposed to hear that. He also understands why she said it, because that would mean... they should team up and work on this together. And obviously, that’s the last thing Zatanna wants to do.

“Look, Zee-!”

“You can stay at the Watchtower tonight. Come on, let’s go.”

She cuts him off before he can say anything and spins on her heel, revealing yet another wonderful asset of hers as she summons another boom tube.

Constantine tries not to stare too hard at Zatanna Zatara’s perfectly shaped derriere as they step from the dirty, dingy warehouse street into the clinical and pristine corridor of the Justice League’s Watchtower in orbit above the planet.

Turning back to him, Zatanna gestures to the hall.

“You remember the way, I trust. Just go and get some sleep, John. You look like you clearly need it.”

Constantine shifts for a moment, hesitating to follow the instruction.

“Look, Zee... if you need my help...”

Zatanna huffs and rolls her eyes.

“If I need your help, I’ll ask for it John. And... if I find out anything about the House of Mystery or that it’s connected to what I’m investigating, you’ll be the first person to know. Happy?”

Not really. It wasn’t like he needed more work on his plate after all. And he’d still lost his House, on top of having a pretty crummy day. But then, all of that was sort of par for the course when you were John Constantine. He was self-aware and observant enough to recognize that fact. In the end, he had to find his own happiness. Speaking of which...

“I know what might make us both happy. Why don’t you come with me? Help me find my way just in case I get lost. Maybe... fluff my pillows for me?”

He’s not trying to be an asshole or anything, but he knows the moment that Zatanna’s face scrunches up in disgust that he’s swung and missed.

“For fuck’s sake John... no, I’m not going to ‘fluff your pillows for you’. Honestly, we’re not together. And we’re not getting back together either.”

Constantine raises his hands in surrender once more.

“Never said we were or that we should be, Zee. Just... makin’ an offer. Doesn’t have to mean anything.”

“That’s the problem, John. It never means anything to you.”

Ouch. Grimacing, Constantine sighs.

“Now you know that’s not true, Zatanna...”

She looks slightly apologetic, but not very much as she shrugs her shoulders, arms once again crossed over her chest.

“Sorry, you’re right. It never means *enough* to you.”

Before he can reply, she points down the hall again.

“Go, John. Before someone else comes through and starts asking why we’re letting you up here after what happened last time.”

Right. That was fair. Nodding, Constantine waves goodbye and turns to make his way down the hall towards the guest quarters. Best to catch some shut eye before making any decisions about whether he’d go after the House or not. But even if he didn’t... it sounded like Zatanna needed his help with this whole Lord of Order situation. She just wasn’t willing to admit it.

Whether she wanted him to or not... he’d be there for her. Always.

-x-X-x-

The House was pretty amazing, even if it clearly needed his helping hand. Not to say the place was filthy or nasty or anything like that... but there didn’t seem to be a single part of the residence that didn’t have at least some dust on it.

Indeed, Cole has spent the past few hours going through and cleaning every surface. His cleaning magic might have made him at least a little bit of a neat freak. He didn’t have OCD or anything like that, but it was just sort of the principle of the thing, wasn’t it? When you had the power he had and you did nothing with it... then the messes that remained uncleaned were your fault.

Besides, he could tell the House liked it. That was still a strange sensation, to feel a connection to what seemed to be a somewhat intelligent piece of property. The House loved when he used his magic on it. Pleasure, satisfaction, bliss... these were just some of the sensations that Cole got from it as he worked his way through the place.

Meanwhile, the House itself had clearly been lived in previously, because it was far from empty. Every room was fully furnished and filled with... stuff for lack of a better word. Not clutter necessarily, everything seemed like it had its place, but there wasn’t exactly another way for Cole to describe the numerous paintings, vases, globes, and other knick-knacks.

It was a lot and he didn't even know how to begin categorizing it all... but he was at least able to clean it all up, removing dirt layers from every surface as he waves his hands this way and that. Sure, it took a long time... but honestly, he enjoyed the work. There was something extremely satisfying about setting his surroundings to rights, about making everything around him perfectly neat and tidy.

So much so that when he finally finishes and finds himself back in the House's kitchen, Cole almost doesn't register that he's done at first. But then the smell of food cooking hits him and he blinks upon realizing that someone is making a meal. Raven?

Slowly entering the kitchen, Cole expects to see Raven at the oven. Which is in and of itself surprising, because he hadn't even known she COULD cook.

Only... no, Raven was not at the oven. Instead, she was sitting over at the table looking... chagrined for some reason. Though she does perk up when she sees him.

Instead, someone else is at the oven. A blonde woman in a beautiful blue dress wearing a half-apron around her waist. She turns to look at Cole and immediately perks up, perfectly red lips curling into a wide smile.

"Ah! Master, I felt you finish up a bit ago so I thought I'd get started! Dinner for you and your pet will be ready shortly!"

... What in the world was going on?!

-x-X-x-

A/N: Yes this is the House of Mystery personified. I'm basing her appearance off of the Grace Hargreeves, the robot mom from the Umbrella Academy, because the appearance from the comics that was linked over on the Discord is a bit meh imo.

Remember to Vote, leave a Like, and let me know what you think!

