

Release that Witch... and Wizard?!

Disclaimer: All characters here are at least 18. Hogwarts starts later, so by the time Harry arrives, he's 19. Cheng Yen (陈嫣) was in her mid-20s before waking up in the 21-year-old body of Garcia Wimbledon. Witches gain their first awakening upon adulthood, at 18 years of age.

Story Starts

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Chapter 1.2 -

The Witch and the Wizard

"Your Highness, you're risking too much by doing this. Even though they're sealed with God's Stone of Retribution, it isn't completely safe."

Carter Lannis, the Chief Knight, broke the silence. The moment she revealed her intent to meet the witch and warlock, he all but dropped to his knees, pleading for her to abandon such 'foolish' plans.

He ignored a princess's direct command and refused to yield—not when she so blatantly disregarded her own safety.

'How could my "fearless" knight be such a bugbear?' Garcia thought.

She wished that someone would simply sew her knight's mouth shut.

'At least Barov isn't here,' she mused with a low chuckle, recalling her aide still rooted in her study, neurons misfiring as he tried and failed to process what had happened.

"If you can't even face what you call evil, how will you summon the courage to conquer it? I thought you, of all people, would know that," she said, voice cool and cutting.

"Before fighting evil, one must know one's strength. Recklessness is not courageous," Carter rebutted.

"You mean that you'll uphold justice against an inferior enemy, but turn a blind eye to a superior enemy?" Garcia challenged, her eyes meeting Carter Lannis's.

"No, Your Highness, I mean..." Carter stammered.

"First, you feared a witch raid, and now you're afraid to face captives already robbed of their strength. My Chief Knight truly is one of a kind."

She seized the moment, leaving Carter Lannis mute as she flipped her hair and pressed forward. Her retinue shadowed her in silence, unease carved on every face as the cold breath of the dungeon drew nearer.

Although the Chief Knight was talkative, he lacked skill in debate and was at a loss before Garcia's silver tongue. Soon, the party reached the bottom floor of the dungeon.

At her nod, the guard unlatched the wooden door, its dark metal frame groaning as it swung open. A small barred window glinted at its crown. Torch in hand, he entered first, coaxing fire to the waiting sconces fixed upon the four pillars, until the chamber stirred with light.

Beyond the door stretched a cramped hallway, lined on either side with iron-barred cells that faced one another. The witch and the warlock waited within, their hands lashed behind them. As the torchlight spilt across the stone, her reseda-green eyes found theirs—bright green glinting from one cell, pale blue gleaming from the other.

"Leave me."

"Your Highness!" Their cries thundered through the dungeon's damp stone. Her retinue raised their voices, and from the stairway descended Carter Lannis and Barov—drawn by the outcry, their protests joining the rest as they stepped into the torchlight.

The witch's eyes were blank. Across from her, the warlock lounged cross-legged, one brow lifted, his glare sharp and challenging.

"Did I stutter?" Garcia asked coolly, her eyes sweeping the chamber. Fatigue showed in her guards' faces; one or two glared, but none held her gaze for long.

"Your—" Carter Lannis started, voice rising, but the princess cut him off before he could finish.

"Aren't they already sealed by the God's Stone? Even their physical strength is rendered pointless under its influence, right?"

With no objections raised, Garcia continued. "Be at ease—I won't remove the stone, nor enter their cells. Your task is simple: guard the stairway. No witch will slip through. And before either of you speaks again—this is my decree as your liege—or else."

She let the words hang. Truth be told, she had no power to back them. Her strength was nothing, and her threats emptier still. These were her father's loyal men—yet that loyalty stretched thin enough to cover her, for now.

Barov sighed, shoulders slumping, while Carter met his glance and gave a curt nod. Together, they ordered the men up the stairs.

"I hope you know what you're doing," Barov said as he sighed and followed the rest.

She waited for Barov's steps to fade before pulling the wooden door shut. It wouldn't muffle much—the dungeon's stone walls threw every sound back at her—but it was something, at least.

Both prisoners followed her with their eyes. Garcia tapped her foot, fingers at her chin, weighing how to begin.

According to her recently gained memories, it was already late autumn, and the dungeon's chill was sharp enough to fog each breath. Wrapped in a fur

coat with silk lining, Garcia felt none of it. The two in their cells, dressed only in thin garments, were not so fortunate.

The girl's arms and legs had gone pale with cold, while the man seemed accustomed to the dreary temperature. Yet the girl's once-empty blue eyes now held a glimmer—like a calm lake before heavy rain.

There was no fear on the witch's face, nor any sign of anger or hatred. The man looked relaxed, as if nothing bad could touch him.

Garcia sighed as she shrugged off her coat, threading it through the metal bars of the girl's cell, letting the coat dangle.

"Can you stand? Fret not, I have no plans of hurting either of you, but I have a few questions first." She locked eyes with the girl, who tilted her head in confused surprise at the gesture.

"Come, I can see that you're shivering."

The girl tried to stand up against the wall, but her sluggish motion made her seem as if she could fall at any moment. Eventually, she managed to find her footing and hobble to the bars, turning her back so Garcia could settle the coat across her shoulders.

"Turn around," Garcia said gently. "And what's your name?"

"Anna," the girl murmured while she turned to face Garcia.

Garcia reached out to fix the coat, ensuring it stayed settled on her shoulders. Anna barely came up to Garcia's mouth in height, so the coat hung long, almost brushing the floor.

"Can you describe what happened when the mine collapsed?" Garcia asked.

Anna nodded and began talking, her throat clearly dry and hoarse.

Garcia was surprised because she expected her to stay silent or to curse at her angrily, but she responded to all of her questions cooperatively.

It wasn't a complicated story. Anna's father had been a miner, trapped when the North Slope Mine collapsed. Word spread quickly, and Anna, along with the miners' families, rushed to help. The mine was rumoured to be an abandoned monster lair, riddled with forked paths. The rescuers split at the entryway, leaving Anna with only Harry, her new neighbour who had volunteered to help—the warlock who had recently moved to Border Town.

They found her father pinned beneath a cart of ore, unable to move. Another miner rifled through his pockets, and when confronted, the looter tried to kill Harry with a pickaxe.

Harry reassured Anna and her father that he would keep her being a witch a secret as he helped with the rescue. However, early the next morning, Anna's father went out on his crutches and reported to the patrolling guards that his daughter was a witch.

"Why?" Garcia couldn't help but ask.

A voice cut through behind Garcia as the newly identified Harry answered, "I interrogated her father, and it was because you can get twenty-five gold royals for reporting a witch," he said with a sneer and an easily identifiable accent tainting his speech.

'Wait, we're speaking English?!' Garcia realised. Only now did it strike her that everyone here used English—not even Mandarin.

'How could two different realities have the same language? And again, why English—not even Mandarin?' Doubt pricked her mind, whispering that perhaps this was her brain's final delusion before death.

Snapping out of her thoughts, she returned to what she'd been about to do—probe Anna's abilities.

"So you used magic to stop the man from killing your friend. What's your magic like?"

"Enough. Hey, lady—how long are you planning to leave this choker on me? Take it off, and I'll take care of everything else."

Garcia could barely follow what happened next. One moment she was questioning Anna, the next the warlock was calling her 'lady' and demanding she remove his choker—containing the God's Stone of Retribution, which bound his magic.

But the demand hadn't been aimed at her. A blonde woman suddenly appeared inside the warlock's cell, knife flashing as she slid the blade between his neck and choker, snapping it free. She then tossed the God's Stone into the corner of the cell.

The next thing Garcia knew, she was bound to a chair, a wooden table before her. His shackles had become hers, her wrists fixed to the table's centre—like one of those police interrogation rooms from dramas.

He waved a hand, and his rags rippled into black dress trousers and polished shoes, a crisp white shirt, and a long black coat lined in green.

Another wave—the cell bars vanished. He strolled to the table, sat across from Garcia—a chair appearing just in time to catch him—and crossed his legs with ease.

"Come join us," the warlock said to the shocked faces of Anna and the unidentified blonde intruder, as two more chairs appeared at each side of the table.

"Fuck, I forgot that I bloody can't see—you'd think that's the first thing I'd fix, right? Where's my mokeskin pouch? Accio."

A brown pouch shot through the wooden door's bars and into his hand.

He opened the pouch as he rummaged through it, his whole arm sinking into its depths—breaking the law of conservation of mass, the inside clearly larger than its outer size.

"Ah, yes, here. You guys broke my bloody glasses when you caught me, and I only have a limited number of those." His tone was now whiny but had a hint of mischievousness, as if he was in on a joke only he understood. He placed his rounded frames on the bridge of his nose.

"Better. Thanks for holding this for me." He leaned forward, caught Garcia's wrist, and with a click slid the watch from her wrist—and buckled it back onto his.

"It's rather dark and dreary here. And aren't you guys going to sit?" With a snap of his fingers, a ball of light floated up near the ceiling of the room; with a wave of his hand, the previously conjured chairs vanished—reappearing behind Anna's and the intruder's knees, forcing them to sit.

Both girls shrieked as the chairs scraped forward, seating them at either side of the table. The grating noise clawed at Garcia's nerves; she half-expected the guards to burst through the barred door—yet nothing moved beyond it.

"Fret not, they will not be coming anytime soon. I've warded and silenced this area."

A chill crept up Garcia's spine as the realisation of her predicament crashed over her. She looked to both sides, as the two were still reeling from their shock, and four glasses of water appeared.

"No one can say I'm not a gracious host."

Reseda-green met bright green.

"We're quite thankful you stayed our execution. That was the only time I was sure I couldn't escape in time. So in return, I'll humour you." He raised a mocking brow. "What is it you want from us?"

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END

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