

Meet Morgan Chandler

I tossed a thumbs-up sign over my shoulder as I walked towards my doom. I glanced up to find Morgan beaming at my dorky gesture. *Aces, Meri. Way to make an entrance.*

I offered him a shaky smile in return. “Hi. I’m here about a package?” Despite our lengthy conversation, I still felt really nervous in his presence.

Morgan gestured to a coffee cup sitting on the counter in front of him.

In complete confusion, I stammered, “I didn’t order...”

“Consider it a thank-you gift.”

When my idiotic nature kept me glued to my current square of carpet, Morgan picked up the cup and brought it to me.

I barely succeeded in taking it without dropping it. “Um, you’re welcome?” I readjusted my grip, silently praying I wouldn’t dump hot coffee all over him. Humiliation of epic proportions wasn’t a good way to start the day.

He took a step closer and gazed directly into my eyes. I was instantly mesmerized by the sea green splendor before me. His eyes should totally be used as some sort of government truth serum. Those tiny flecks of gold that flashed when he smiled? They would ferret out every last secret.

“Remember? Last week you told me about the *Adventure* Easter egg?”

I grinned, pleased he thought the secret message from the game creator was as cool as I did.

Courtney snorted. “Easter eggs? I had no idea you were so lame, Meri. It’s September already.”

Instead of wasting my energy crafting a witty retort for our obnoxious receptionist, I fought the urge to touch the stray curls which had fallen across Morgan’s forehead. They were alarmingly close to obstructing my view of his incredible eyes.

I cleared my throat self-consciously. “Thank you for the coffee, Morgan. It was totally unnecessary, but much appreciated.” I raised the cup in a toast to him and turned to walk back to my desk.

“Meri, wait!”

I came to an abrupt halt and whipped back around. *Please* let this be over soon. The longer I remained in his presence, the greater my chances of saying something moronic—with Courtney as a witness. Just the thought of it made me shiver.

Concern flashed across his face as he gently rubbed my arm. “I was hoping you might feel sorry enough for me to drop a few more hints my way.” He paused dramatically. “I might even be willing to throw in some appetizers next time.”

Butterflies danced in my stomach. Between the goosebumps from his touch and the prospect of time alone with him, I was left speechless. I both wanted and feared this outcome more than anything in the world. I opened my mouth to say who knows what when I heard Courtney gasp.

She pointed at my chest accusingly. “Is that, like, a *cow* on your shirt?”

I peered down at my shirt, wondering if I had forgotten to change out of my Ben & Jerry’s nightshirt this morning. Thankfully, my eyes fell on none other than a black and white outline of Yoda, my favorite Star Wars character.

“Blind as a bat, you are.” I slapped my hand over my mouth, astonished my sarcastic comment was actually said out loud. I usually keep much better control of my biting wit.

Morgan collapsed into laughter, clearly understanding my Grand Jedi Master reference.

Fury alighting her delicate features, Courtney spat, “Don’t you have a test roster to develop?”

Panic struck my heart when I noticed she was caressing a stack of lime green paper as she said this. Dear God, not again. Images of Dan’s coveted presentation in fluorescent wonder flashed through my mind. I wouldn’t survive the backlash this time.

“Test roster. Absolutely.” I bobbed my head up and down so fast, my teeth rattled a little. I waved a quick goodbye to Morgan and ran off before he could make any other mention of extracurricular activities. Now was definitely not the time to incur Courtney’s wrath. I had a battle to win, which meant I couldn’t spend late hours in the office correcting her vengeful copying. My instincts told me it wouldn’t be long before the Black Army picked up my trail.

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