

A Strange Case of Magic: Chapter Two

The stairs leading down to the book stacks were narrow and dimly lit. Giles liked going down them; he felt secret and mysterious, like an archaeologist exploring an underground tomb. He walked amongst the tall shelves, trying to match the numbers on the book spines with the numbers Tina had scribbled out for him. His feet clanged along the metal catwalks. When he looked down, he could see the tops of people's heads on the floor below. In the distance, he heard the faint echo of Tina and Kevin's voices.

After a few minutes he found one of Tina's books, high on a shelf. He pulled over a small step ladder, climbed up, and yanked out the book. From his high vantage point, he could see over the tops of the stacks in front of him.

Something caught his eye. He squinted. A book had slid out from one of the shelves and was floating in thin air. Giles gaped. He scrubbed his eyes with his fists to make sure he was seeing right. The book opened by itself, and all the pages fluttered, as if some ghostly hand were riffling through them.

Giles took a deep breath. Another book glided out from the shelf and stacked itself on top of the first. Slowly, Giles stepped down from the ladder. He tiptoed around the stacks, and soon found Tina and Kevin.

"There's something I think you should see," he whispered.

"I don't think so, Giles. I'm quite occupied right now."

"No. Really. You'll want to see this."

"Why?"

"You'd better take a look for yourself," Giles said. He held a finger to his lips, and led them stealthily back to where he'd seen the floating books. All three poked their heads carefully around the corner.

Kevin's eyes widened in amazement, but Tina looked very calm.

A tower of six or seven books swayed in mid-air.

"Fascinating," Tina mumbled to herself.

"Um, Tina -- " Kevin said in a whisper.

"Not now," Tina said.

"Na-na-na-chooo!"

Giles jumped, Tina jumped, even the floating books seemed to give a jump, and then they all started moving through the air, down the corridor. Giles thought he heard the sound of footsteps ringing out against the metal floor, but they quickly faded away.

Tina gave her brother a withering look. "You picked an interesting moment to sneeze."

"It's all these books," Kevin said sheepishly. "What can I do?"

"I only wish I'd had longer to make observations," said his sister.

Giles cautiously moved closer to the large gap in the shelf.

"They were all books on magic tricks," said Tina simply.

Giles glanced over at her in surprise. "How'd you know?"

"Giles," Tina began, "I don't think it would be an exaggeration for me to say I've read most of the books in this library." She waved her hand at the gap on the shelf. "This section here, for instance, is where the books on magic are kept. I recognize the shelf numbers."

"And now they're all gone," mumbled Kevin, shaking his head.

"It was like the books were being pulled out and stacked up by someone," Giles said. "Or something!"

"Ghosts!" said Kevin.

"Most possibly," said Tina. "I think we should have a chat with Miss Hibbins."

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