

It had all started with one question, one that Mark was honestly kind of surprised that she hadn't asked him before.

"So, what got you into hypnosis, anyway?"

He looked up from his phone. "What?"

Jessica clicked her tongue, rolled her eyes, and leaned over the counter. "I *said*," she said, voice a bit louder, "'So, what got you *in-to hyp-no-sis, anyway?*'"

"I heard what you said! I meant- *Gah!*" He sat up on the couch, only to duck his head back down when she lobbed a washcloth at him.

"Then why'd you ask me what I said?!"

"Because I didn't know what you *meant!*" Mark laughed, tossing the towel right back. "Like. What do you *mean* what got me into hypnosis?"

"Don't you play dumb with me!" She levelled a finger at him, eyes narrowed. "There's always a start of darkness! Like, you see it all the *time* on websites or whatever." She dried her hands on the washcloth, stepped around the kitchen counter, and leaned against the back of the couch. "'So-and-so got me into mind control on such-and-such when I was a kid.' Like, a cartoon or whatever."

"Oh," Mark replied, turning his attentions once more to his phone. "I dunno. Well, I mean, I know, but. I dunno."

"You know, but you don't know." She leaned closer. "Baby."

He looked up at her. The second he turned to face her, she thunked her forehead down against his. Emerald eyes locked on his, wide, bottomless, enchanting. He blinked. Reaching up to his face, she cupped his cheek and simply held his attention for a moment. Not especially difficult, considering all their prior conditioning meant he was already drifting into the pleasant haze of trance.

Bottomless eyes. Enchanting eyes.

"That's bullshit."

Her deadpan cut through the fugue like a knife through butter, and just like that, the haze was gone. He had to hand it to her, Jess knew how to kill the mood like the best of them. "Don't you even *tell* me that there isn't some cartoon or some old tee-vee show somewhere that you didn't jack off to, like, a *billion* times when you were a teenager. Like."

She pulled away, gave his hair a tousle, and walked around the couch to sit next to him. "OK."

Willy Wonka."

"Willy Wonka had hypnosis?"

"No, it didn't have *hypnosis*." She said, rolling her eyes. Only to blink and roll them once more, this time in thought. "Did it have hypnosis? No. No, I don't think so. But, uh. The girl. The girl with the blueberries."

"Veruca-"

"No, she was the squirrel one. Uhm." Jess pulled a pillow into her lap, and Mark took the cue to lay his head upon it. "I can't remember her name. But she was, like, the one that chewed all the gum, or whatever, and it turned her into a giant blueberry. And, like, a bunch of kids saw that movie when they were, y'know, kids." She stroked his hair. Mark closed his eyes, feeling the tension leaving his body already. "And now they're hardcore into that kind of thing."

"Mm," he said, nodding sagely. "Blueberries."

"Not blueberries! Blueberrification!" She swatted his chest when he started to giggle. She started to giggle, too. "Shut up! This is very serious! The epedimology of fetishes is very serious!"

"Oh, yes, of course. My apologies, Professor Hirsch."

"Your apologies indeed!" She faux-snapped. "But you get what I mean, right? That was the thing that sent them down the path of fucked-up sex-ideas. What! What's so funny!"

Wheezing with laughter, Mark brought a hand up to cover his mouth. "Sex-ideas!" Her laughter turned harder in tandem, along with her whacks to his chest.

"Shut up, I couldn't think of anything better to say!"

"Fetishes! They're called 'fetishes!'"

"That would have made too much sense! Oh, my God, just tell me what it was!"

"What what was?"

"What what was was! Oh, my God! The thing that got you into hypnosis! I could just fucking zap you and make you answer like that, you know!" She went back to smoothing his hair, smile on her voice.

"But that wouldn't be fun," he murmured. Eyes shut, his breathing slowed with each stroke of her hand on his scalp.

"No," she finally agreed. "It wouldn't be."

Jess sighed, though not out of exasperation. The two sat there for a moment, quiet, still save for Jessica's hand on Mark's head.

"Was it from a tee-vee show?" She finally asked, though her hand didn't stop.

"No." He shook his head in her lap.

"Was it from a movie?"

He cracked one eye open. "Is this a game of twenty questions or something?"

She smiled down at him, eyes widening just so. "Ooh, that sounds like fun! OK, yeah, twenty questions. Two down. Or-" She tapped a fingertip against his forehead. "You gotta answer my second one. Movie?"

He shut his eyes once more, smiling. "Yeah, it was from a movie."

"Animated movie?"

"Animated movie."

"Alright." He could practically hear the smile on her voice, and he knew exactly why she was bubbling with anticipation. "Was it a Disney movie?"

"Yes, it was a Disney movie."

"Was it-"

"No, it was not The Jungle Book."

Jess instantly dissolved into cackling. "Aw, babe!" Head lolling back, she clapped her hands gleefully, and he couldn't help but laugh with her. "I was like, 'Oh, God, the fucking hypno-snake strikes again!' Ahaha!" Her laughter mellowed into giggling as her hands went once more to his scalp. "Fuck. I have no idea what it could be if it's not The Jungle Book."

"Think hard, babe. You're pretty much there already."

She was silent for a moment. Or two. Or three.

"Was there hypnosis in The Lion King?"

His smile widened. "Is that one of your questions?"

Jess was silent once more. Finally, though, she spoke. "Sure."

"There was no hypnosis in The Lion King."

"Fuck!" Her hand stilled, and Jess didn't speak for nearly a full minute. "I can only think of, like, Aladdin. Like, with the staff and stuff. Was it Aladdin?"

"It was not Aladdin."

"Fuck!" Jess groaned, head lolling back and arms going to her sides. Well, one of them, at least. The other one flopped down to Mark's belly, rubbing idle circles on it. "Dude, I can only think of Kaa now. Oh, my God."

He opened both eyes, glancing up at her. "You need a hint?"

Jess held her breath for a second, then released it in a groan. "Hh. Yeah, I need a hint."

He shut his eyes once more. "OK. This counts for two questions, then." He shifted on the couch. Her hand felt good on his stomach. "It's from the Disney Renaissance."

"I don't know what that means!"

And once more, his eyes went open, a brow quirked along with them. "You don't know what the Dis- Uh." And shut once more. "It's from the nineties."

"Ugh." She groaned again. At least she had the good sense to keep rubbing his belly while she thought. "Um. There was Aladdin. There was Beauty and the Beast. The Little Mermaid. The Lion King. Um." She started drumming her fingertips on his stomach instead. "Hercules. Was there hypnosis in Hercules?"

"You could kind of argue that the two little minion guys trying to seduce the pegasus as the sexy girl pegasus was, like. Kind of hypnosis? But not really. And you're missing one or two of the other movies, but it wasn't one of them, so. Moot point."

She sighed through her nose, and he couldn't help but laugh. "This is nonsense. There wasn't even hypnosis in those other ones!"

"Ohoho, yes, there was, yes, there was!" Mark sat up, slinging an arm around Jess' waist. She slumped against him, leaning her head on his shoulder. "Trust me, there was."

She stared into space, thinking. "So, uh. It wasn't Aladdin. It wasn't Hercules. It wasn't The Lion King."

"So you have two left."

"So I have two left." Jess clicked her tongue and narrowed her eyes at nothing.

Finally, she looked up to Mark and quirked an eyebrow. "The Little Mermaid?"

"It was The Little Mermaid."

Her eyes widened, and so did her smile. "What, really? No way! I don't remember that at all!"

"That's because you're not the one that burnt out the tape you had of it." Mark reached up to tousle her hair, and Jess giggled in response. She nestled into his side, pulling him into a hug. "Yeah, Ursula uses Ariel's voice to hypnotize Prince Eric."

"Oooh, yeah!" Her eyes widened to saucers, and Jess bared her teeth in a smile. "She totally does! Oh, my God, I forgot all about that part!" She trilled happily, shutting her eyes. "So," she said finally. "What do I win?"

"You win the key to my dick, pretty much. Like, holy shit."

He tried -- and failed -- to suppress a shiver as she reached up to tangle a hand in his hair. "Oh, yeah?" Her voice dipped to a sultry purr, right in his ear. "You like Ursula that much, huh?"

"Vanessa," he mumbled, trying to ignore the heat blooming on his cheeks. "When she was pretending to be a human, she was Vanessa." He gulped when she giggled.

"You are such a horny little dork. I can't believe it." She settled her head on his shoulder again. Tracing circles on his chest with a single fingertip, Jessica vibrated with a hum. "Is that why you always get rock-hard when I call you 'my prince?'"

He shuddered at that, and the inklings of trance crept up upon him. Thoughts turned sluggish at the sibilant hum of her voice, and it suddenly felt right to just. Relax. Still, she'd asked him a question. "Yeah. I mean--"

"Because normally when a guy wants to be called something like that," she purred, cutting him off, "it's because he wants to be in control. But you don't want to be in control, do you, my prince?"

Oh, fuck. Fuck, he was slipping under. Eyelids lop-sided, Mark mumbled weakly. "Wuh-We still playing twenty questions or something?"

That seemed to throw her off.

But only for around a second. "Yes. Yes, we are." With a giggle, Jessica pulled away and- Oh, she was patting her lap. Mark gulped, but even out of trance, there was no better pillow than Jessica's thighs. Well, maybe her chest, but for right now... He laid his head in her lap, and within seconds, her fingertips were scritch-scratch-scratching at his scalp. His flagging eyelids finally sank shut, and he hummed.

"I wanna make a bet."

He didn't open his eyes, but he managed to answer. "Whuzzat."

"I bet," Jess murmured, "that I can put you under in twenty questions."

When Mark inhaled -- sharply -- Jessica giggled. "Is that a 'yes?'" When he hesitated, she continued. "Because if it's a 'no,' I'm just going to put you under right now."

"Yes!" He mumbled, suddenly galvanized. "Yes, yes, I take the, uh. I take the bet."

"There's my good boy," she whispered, and Mark couldn't help but whimper when she pressed a kiss to his forehead. "So, let's begin. Twenty questions. I'll count them down for you, dear." She adjusted her seat.

"Do you feel comfortable?"

How could he not? Her hands on his head, smoothing his hair, smoothing his thoughts- No, no, had to stick to. To objective facts. "Yes," he said with the beginnings of a nod. "Yes, I feel comfortable."

She was silent. Then, with a sultry murmur, she leaned in. "One."

Jessica was the only girl Mark knew that could make counting numbers into foreplay.

But it wasn't the numbers that turned him on. No, it was the undercurrent, the little implication that the higher the numbers got, the harder it would be for his lazy, relaxed brain to keep track of them. She always kept track of things for him when he got like that, he idly mused. Numbers, thoughts, everything.

Fuck, one question down, and he was already putting himself in trance for her. He pinched himself -- not very hard, admittedly -- and gave himself a jostle. It helped, but not much.

"Do you feel sleepy, my prince?"

That was cheating. That was *cheating*. "Yes," he mumbled. The urge to reach down and palm himself was steadily growing stronger. He was a lightweight, sure -- Jess loved to tease him about it the instant he got the slightest bit drowsy listening to her -- but he had his pride, too! At least, until she started cooing in his ear about how he was being such a good boy.

"Two. You can feel yourself getting sleepier. Can't you, my prince?"

It was true. Even opening his mouth to answer coaxed a yawn from his drowsy lips. Finally, though, he replied. "Yes." He tried not to think about how sleepy he sounded. But there wasn't much to focus on besides his voice.

There was his voice. Sounded sleepy. Sounded weak.

There was the white noise machine. Jess insisted they keep it on all the time. Thin walls gave her rationale a certain legitimacy, but given how often she'd sneak up behind him and tell him to focus on the soft, soothing static of it for a snap induction...

And there was her voice.

He was fucked.

"Three." She kissed his forehead again, and his thoughts fled at the touch. He mustered his defenses as best he could, but-

"You feel weak, don't you?"

He wriggled in her lap. "That's not fair, these aren't-"

"You feel *weak*, don't you?" She insisted, and even if he knew this was pure Ericksonian cheating, Mark had to answer. Didn't he? She'd asked him a question. He had to answer.

"Yes." It sounded feeble, even to him.

"But you know I'll take care of you, don't you, my *darling* prince?"

That took any nervousness, any trepidation he had and just...melted it away. Tension in his shoulders -- tension he didn't even know he was holding, really -- bled from his muscles as he relaxed with a sigh. There was a pleasure in feeling like he was being hunted, like he was trapped by someone so much smarter and more clever than he was.

But having that trap spring around him and ensure his safety, to be helplessly caught in the warm, soft blanket of her reassurances. That was inescapable.

"And you can feel yourself drifting deeper and deeper. You can feel your thoughts just fading away, just going to sleep, just like you. You can feel your brain relaxing just as much as your body's relaxing. You can feel everything just slow down. Because you don't need to be fast. You don't need to think. You don't need to worry about anything when you're with me."

"*Do* you?"

Mark's jaw had long since gone slack. It was impossible to think. So it was impossible to think about clenching his jaw. Or not drooling. Or not palming his cock through his pants.

But just like how Jessica took charge of his thoughts, she gently guided his hand away from his crotch and took care of that for him.

Mark groaned in something blending gratitude, pleasure, and approval. She wasn't clumsy or

sloppy like he was when he got like this. No, as words lost meaning, as her sweet, velvet-smooth voice poured pure submission into his brain, Mark sprawled out on the couch and steadily ground his hips up into her hand.

Even that was too much for her, it seemed, because Jessica pressed down insistently on his hip until he stopped. As soon as he did, though, she purred "*Good boy*" into his ear and slipped her hand under the waistband of his underwear.

And wrapped her hand around his shaft.

And started to slowly pump his cock.

Even lucid, Mark knew that the orgasm was never the end goal. Or was that just what Jess had drilled into his brain? He couldn't deny that there was a dreamy sort of pleasure to just staying in the golden warmth of arousal. When they'd first started dating -- before Jess had found out he was just as kinky as she was -- there'd been nights where she'd tamed his desperate need into smoldering, lazy appreciation for her body. The sight, the sensation of it.

Daydreams of her guiding him onto his back and riding him slow and steady for what felt like hours had been the biggest reason he'd finally come clean about his fantasies, come to think of it.

So this was hardly new. Her guiding words, his inevitable submission. And then the exquisite plateau of her pleasure and his. He heard her words, but he couldn't think about them. He felt her hand, but he didn't want anything more than what she gave him. He knew she was there, all around him, in his thoughts and his heart.

It was hard to tell when he fell asleep. He hadn't been thinking for so long. He hadn't been moving for so long. It was easier to say when he finally woke up. When Jessica nudged his shoulder once, twice, thrice with a giggling shake, Mark's eyes blinked open.

"Guh," he managed, sitting up more out of instinct than anything else. "I don't- Whuh?"

"Still loopy, huh." She giggled, propping him up with an insistent push and resting her head on his shoulder. "You want the play-by-play or not, babe? Actually-" She sat up once more, an impish grin on her face. "What's the last thing you remember? Let's start the recap with that."

He brought a hand to his forehead, blinking to clear the fog from his thoughts. She'd always joked that watching him come out of trance was like watching a computer boot up: processes clicking on one by one until he was back to normal. He didn't know it just then, but he agreed.

"Uh. We were talking about...Aladdin. No, uh. It was, uh."

"Remember what I said about filler words!"



"Oh, uh-" He winced. "Sorry! Try to. Eliminate filler words. Because." He shut his eyes. Took a deep breath. "It helps you stay conscious."

"And what does staying conscious help with?"

He opened his eyes, slung an arm around her waist, and smiled. "Coming out of trance. OK, I think I'm good."

"Good!" Her head went once more to his shoulder as she snuggled up against him. "OK. Gimme the rundown."

"So. I remember we were talking about what got me into hypnosis. And you wanted to play twenty questions. Or-" He glanced over to her without moving his head. "Was it me?"

"Doesn't matter. But you're doing very well! I'm impressed, considering how easy you went under."

"Shut *up*."

"I'll shut up if you can remember how long it took before you were humping my *hand*, babe. Oh!" She leaned up to give him a peck on the cheek. "I'm sorry. I meant, of course, to say..." A kiss to his ear now. "My *prince*."

"Lemme *focus*!"

"My *priiiiince*," she purred, shimmying her hips in her seat and reaching to embrace him with both arms.

"We played twenty questions, and, like, I had to help you out *so much*-"

"Not *that* much!"

"I had to help you out to the point of *handicapping* myself, but you *eventually* guessed The Little Mermaid." She faux-pouted, dropping one of her arms. "And then you put me under. With, uh. Twenty questions."

"Now, now," Jess giggled. "Let's be accurate. Because 'twenty questions' kind of implies that it took twenty questions before you were drooling. It took *you*."

Mark realized he was holding his breath. She'd pulled away, perched on her hands and knees on the couch, watching him with glee. Wide-eyed, Jess leaned in. Closer. Closer. Clooooooser.

"Six."

"Oh, *no*!" He laughed, clapping his hands over his face and sagging back. "Argh! Oh, my *God*,

that's, like-"

"No, no, it's super impressive!" Jess padded forward like a particularly mischievous cat, wiggling her hips with each step. "Not just anyone can *drop*-" Mark's eyelids fluttered. "-like you can, baby."

Mark, however, wasn't as keen to celebrate his sprint to the finish. He let his arms fall to his sides and stared at the ceiling for a minute. Then he looked to her. "Did I cum?"

"Nah." Jess nestled into his side again and reached for the remote. "I edged you for, like, a half hour. That's all. Besides." She gave his crotch a pat. "Your underwear would be wet. Context clues, Marky-Mark. Anyway!" A tap-tap-tap turned on the TV, pulled up On Demand, and brought them to the Search menu. "We have a decision to make."

He glanced at her again. "Yeah."

"An important one," she intoned gravely. "Do we watch." She entered in a few letters. "The catalyst for our star-crossed romance. The epitome of the fish out of water love story. The inspiration for a thousand lesbian foot fetishes and one fuckboy's hypno-kink." THE LI turned to THE LITTLE MER as she monologued. "The Little Mermaid. Or. Or! Hey, don't get mad!"

"Or do we play a winner-takes-all game of Twenty Questions and watch what inspired *my* corruption?"

Mark was quiet for moment. Then, eyes narrowed, he asked "Is it animated?"

"It is *not*."

His eyes went wide, and he turned to her with a smile. "Ooooh! Wow, OK, now I'm *actually* curious! OK. Is it a movie?"

"It is not."

"A TV show?"

"Nope."

"...Eh?"

"It was a book."

"A *book*!"

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It took Mark twelve questions to guess that it was Harry Potter, though they had neither the

time nor the inclination to marathon the movies up to *The Goblet of Fire*.

Besides, Jess grumbled, they didn't do nearly as good a job of showing what it felt like in the movie compared to the book.