

4. Trish Goes For It



“Have a slide before we take the slippery-dip apart?” Trish said. She had the feeling that if she let Tim leave, she’d never see him again.

“No thanks,” Tim said. “I should go home. Talk with my pal, Nin. He’ll have some ideas about what’s going on here.”

“Nin?!” Trish said. “What kind of name is that?”

“He’s a wizard,” Tim said. “He rooms with me.” He laughed. “If you can call it a room.”

“A wizard?” Trish said with a different tone. Like, was he serious?

“A retired ninja wizard,” Tim said. “Old and decrepit, he’ll tell you when you learn his signs. Though he’s never wrong about the weather.”

“I’d love to meet him,” she said.



They caught a ride out with Dan, who dropped them off at an old horse paddock just out of the nearer side of the townscape.

“All I see is a couple of building skips,” Dan said. “You live *here*?”

“Not much longer now, I hope,” Tim said. “Fingers-crossed.” He led Trish toward the skips. “Do you want to see inside our living quarters?”

“Maybe later,” Trish. “What’s in this one?” she said about the skip nearest.

“My stash,” Tim said. He dragged some steps over. “Everything I ever salvaged from a job. Stuff that would’ve been tossed.”

“I will definitely want to check out all that!” Trish said, hopes high.



“Oh, my giddy aunt!” she said. “What are you planning to do with all this stuff?”

“I don’t know. I heard that you all used your stashes to join Bosley & Co? How does that work?”

Trish laughed. “We joined with our earlier so-called riches. Now we’re bringing whatever we can find to keep the job going. We think Boss has a plan to make it ‘worth our while’, as the saying goes.”

“Do you think if I put in all this, he’ll take me and my buddy?”

“Not up to him,” Trish said. “You need to be voted in by all of us.”

“Damn,” Tim said.

Trish laughed again. “You heard Boss, we need more workers. I doubt that anyone will vote you gone, wizard and all.”



Clatter! Crunch! Clang!

“Hey there, Nin!” Tim said. “Meet Trish Gardener. From Bosley’s building site. Trish, meet Nin Wizard.”

Trish looked up at the tall old wizard teetering on Tim’s stash.

The wizard winked at her and croaked a couple of words at Tim that Trish did not grasp.

“He asked you to help him set up his weather-watching stair. Says you can use that. He prefers the roof ridge.”

“Of course he did,” she said. “He said all of *three* words?”

Tim chuckled. “He was on the roof already: he prefers it high for reading the wind. I made this stair for him before I knew better.”

Nin croaked again, a longer string of words.

Tim blushed. “He said I should treat you properly. He said to invite you to look at how we live from the top of his stair. And I do, invite you.”

The wizard turned and leaped back to the ridge of the roof in two easy jumps.



“Two swags are all you have?” Trish said. “Pretty bleak. I’ll expect more in the way of furnishings if you want to come and live with me.” She blushed. “Oops, sorry. Wishful thinking probably.”

“Anything I can make!” Tim said. His face as red as hers. “I have enough fixings in that skip to furnish a palace.”

Trish laughed. “No palaces on that little spit of land. How will you move the skips?”

“I’ve got a friend who can maybe help. I’ll go see him later.”



“Oh! I love your water barrel!”

“Our drinking-water. Rain on the roof runs down these channels, and then down the chain into the barrel.”

“Very nifty. Bring that too when you pack,” Trish said. “Would you like to walk me back to where Dan will pick me up?”

“Second best, I guess.”

She elbowed him in his side. “Naughty.”

“Yeah, Nin said that. *He’s* certainly taken to you. He’s keen we make the move as soon as possible. Says there’s some nasty weather gathering in the upper atmosphere. How will I approach Bosley about us joining you all?”

“Well,” she considered. “He likes you already or he wouldn’t have invited you to come to work. Just turn up again, bringing both Nin and your stuff this time. I’ll vouch for you both.”