

Spells 'R Us - Another Friend in Need

By Bill Hart

"I still can't believe that Lynette really dumped me for that jock." moaned Mel. "After all the fun and good times we had together, then, right out of nowhere for no reason at all, she just tells me she doesn't want to go out with me or even see me anymore, and poof she's outta my life."

"Chill out, Melville." said his best friend Cal. "Take it easy, you'll get over it. Trust me on this, bud, I know."

"Yeah, sure." replied Mel. "And what's with the Melville shit. You know I hate being called Melville. And I remember watching you wander around here like some little lost puppy for a couple of weeks after Roni dumped you. You were a real basket case for a while, Callahan."

"And now I'm fine, more or less. Damn, don't you wish our mothers had read someone with a normal name when they were pregnant. We're even. You know, I'm not real sure I'm ready to jump back into that old dating saddle again but I do know I have to get back up on that horse and risk getting thrown off again soon, or I might never risk getting hurt again. You know something, Mel. It's really too bad that I can't find a girl more like you. You know, one who's really easy to talk to and really interested in everything I say and willing to be my best friend for life."

"That's not too likely." Mel smiled. "Say Cal, if you think you'd like a girl like me, I'll put on a dress so you can take me to dinner tonight. I really could use a free meal."

"I don't think so, bud. I'm not that hard up." said Cal encouraged at seeing his friend smile for the first time in days. "I'm glad you're starting to feel better. Are you gonna be alright while I'm in class?"

"I'll be fine, Cal."

"You sure, now. I can always skip class." replied Cal in a worried tone. "I'm your friend, Mel. You know I'd do anything to help you with your problem."

"Yeah, I know, Cal. And I really appreciate it. But I'll be fine. Really." Mel smiled again. "Just go to class."

"Okay. But if you have any problems, have them page me and I'll get here as quick as I can."

"Yes, mother." he joked.

Cal smiled. Maybe his friend would be alright after all. Getting dumped by one girl, even one as pretty and popular as Lynette, wasn't the end of the world. He'll get over her in time, he thought. But if he was heading off for class, he'd better shake a leg. He certainly didn't want to be late.

After Cal left for class, Mel decided to go out and wander around the campus. There were many interesting buildings and other things to see, but he'd never had the time to explore before.

Also, there was that unusual magic shop in the mall across the street. He'd heard lots of stories about strange things happening to the people who went there and almost as many stories about the old man who ran the shop, but Mel found most of them just too weird and farfetched to believe.

Mel smiled as he remembered the tale he'd heard concerning the Sigma Beta Beta sorority. If you believed what circulated through the rumor mill, then Sigma Beta Beta owed its very existence to the old man. Now that was downright really silly and totally unbelievable.

Just what could one old man possibly have done to justify the spread of that kind of rumor with the sorority housing the hottest babes on campus.

Deep in thought and not paying attention to how long or where he wandered, Mel found himself in the mall, standing outside that odd magic shop. Determined to find out whatever truth he could about all the impossible stories, he went inside.

The little bell above the door tinkled as he entered. The old man behind the counter looked up. Was he actually wearing a bathrobe?

"Hello, Melville." he said. "Welcome to Spells 'R Us."

"Do I know you?" asked Mel puzzled. "No, we've never met, Melville." replied the old man. "But I can't begin to tell you how refreshing it is not to hear those famous words 'How'd you know my name?' uttered. I want to thank you for your originality. And before you ask and spoil the mood, I know because I just do. You see, I'm a wizard."

"Right." came Mel's skeptic reply. "And I'm really Herman Melville."

The old man smiled. "Forgive me, Mel. I know how much you hate being called Melville. But I really am a wizard. And to prove it, I have a gift for you." The old man reached down and picked up a small nondescript pendant attached to a gold chain from the counter. He held it out to Mel. "This pendant will grant you one wish, Mel. Anything you want. Absolutely anything at all. All you have to do is hold it or, even better, wear it, say 'I wish', and then make your wish. The pendant will grant your wish by making whatever it was you wished for be as if it had always been the way you wished it to be. After it has granted your wish, the pendant will revert to your personal lucky charm. Nothing more, nothing less."

"And just how much is this wish-granting lucky charm going to cost me?" asked a still very skeptical Mel.

"It's a gift, Mel. Gifts are free." replied the old man. "It's just something I know you need right now." Once again he extended the pendant toward Mel. "Take it. I want you to have it. And if you have any difficulties with it, then you can always bring it back. What could be simpler?"

"I guess." Mel took the pendant from the old man. He looked at it briefly, then put the golden chain over his head. "Thanks."

"Don't mention it." replied the old man. "Just use your wish wisely, Mel."

"Don't worry, I will."

"That's good. And a couple of other things before you leave, Mel. Don't believe all the stories you've heard about my shop and me. But don't disbelieve them either.

"Now I really hate to seem the ungracious host, Mel, but I'm expecting several wizards and witches to show up anytime now. They're in town for their annual convention this weekend. And believe me, it will be in your best interests if you aren't here when they arrive. Unlike me, most of them can be extremely unpredictable in their interactions with mere mortals like yourself."

"Yeah. Sure. Whatever you say," replied Mel slightly annoyed at the abrupt brush off. He turned quickly toward the door to leave.

"It's nothing personal, Mel." said the old man. "You've just caught me on a bad day. Come back anytime."

Sure, I will, thought Mel, as he left the store without saying another word.

As he left the shop, he saw Lynette and that basketball player she'd dumped him for standing in line at the movie theater. At that moment, jealousy and anger almost overwhelmed him. But unwilling to make a scene that would make him look foolish in Lynette's eyes, Mel had quietly snuck away. But he vowed he'd come back. And he'd bring a girl with him. One that would make Lynette jealous enough to dump the jock and return to him. But where could he find a girl like that?

Mel knew that none of the girls he knew would help him make Lynette jealous. Most of them thought he was better off without her.

Too bad, Cal's a guy, he thought. He knew he could always count on his best friend's help, but there was no way that Cal could dress up in girls' clothes and come even remotely close to looking like a passable girl. But wait just a minute.

The gears of Mel's mind meshed silently as he walked home. What was it Cal had said to him earlier? Something about finding a girl like me to solve his problems. And didn't he also say he'd do anything to help me with my problem?

"You know, I wonder, if instead of me trying to seek out and find a girl like Cal," he mumbled, "I could just use my wish to make Cal into that girl. Or maybe, I could word my wish so that he'd be my girlfriend. Then, I wouldn't need Lynette at all. And it's not as if he'd ever notice anything different. From what the old man said about how the pendant fulfills wishes, Cal would be a girl because he would have always been a girl. Damn, this could really work."

By the time, Mel arrived back at their dorm, he'd already decided on how he'd word his wish. Cal, who had returned from his class about an hour earlier, greeted his friend as he entered. "You okay, Mel?" he asked.

"Just fine, Cal." replied Mel, as he turned away from Cal. He walked slowly away from his friend. Before he walked through the doorway into his bedroom, he turned back for a last glance at Cal. Once inside his room, in a barely audible voice, he whispered "I wish" then stopped.

"I can't do this to Cal." he said. "It's not right. I'm being selfish and putting my wants and needs ahead of his. He's my best friend. He'd never even think of doing something like this to me. That's not what friendship is about."

Cal sighed. He couldn't think of himself right now. He stood in front of the mirror standing in the corner of his room. He smiled, then whispered "I wish..." he paused for a moment, "I wish I were Melina, the girlfriend of my best friend Cal."

Mel felt the pendant against his chest begin to heat. And, for what seemed like hours, his body tingled. He knew Cal was in the other room, but still he would have liked to watch his friend's expression as he changed from Melville into Melina, the girl he knew he wanted.

Staring intently at his reflection, he watched as his body appeared to melt, then flow and reshape. Idly, he wondered what Cal was doing in the other room.

Mel's masculinity vanished in a heartbeat. His reformed self was at four inches shorter than before and his hips had widened, while his waist narrowed in return. Mel was amazed to watch his hair turn a very light shade of brown as it flowed quickly down his back to stop just above his newly narrowed waist. And Mel was stunned as his breasts swelled to a size that would make everyone in Sigma Beta Beta green with envy. There could be no confusing this body with a boy now.

Suddenly Mel was very confused. How could anyone think of her as a boy. She was a girl. Anyone who could confuse her with a boy either needed glasses, or was in serious need of psychological counseling.

But Mel's confusion and troubled thoughts quickly passed. They were no longer real. Melina was simply who she was, as well as who she had always been.

Melina looked at her reflection for a moment, then left her room to rejoin Cal.

"You okay, Mel?" asked a concerned Cal.

"Just fine, Cal." she replied. At that moment, Melina noticed a familiar looking pendant on a gold chain hanging around Cal's neck. "Cal?" she asked. "Where did you get that pendant you're wearing?"

"I got it today at Spells 'R Us. You know, that weird old magic shop over in the mall. I went down there today after class and the old man who runs the shop gave it to me. I don't see how he can stay in business giving things away. But he told me the pendant was something I needed and it would bring me good luck."

"Wow. That's almost exactly what the old man told me." said Melina.

"I think that old man is really weird, don't you. But wasn't it supposed to do something else?"

"You know, now that you mention it." replied Cal. "I think it was. But I really can't remember what."

"Then I guess it couldn't have been very important." "No. I guess not." agreed Cal.

"I have an idea." said Melina suddenly. "Why don't we get all dressed up and go out on the town, tonight."

"That sounds like a truly excellent idea to me." replied Cal. "I think, it'll do us both a lot of good to get out of here for a while and have some fun."

"And there will be a couple of people out there, that I can't wait to run into tonight."

"Oooh. Now that sounds really wicked, Mel." A devilish grin spread across Cal's face. "And you know you can count on me for support anytime, Melina."

"I know." she replied. "That's what friends are for. Isn't it? And I can't begin to tell you how happy I am that you're my friend, Calandra."

And in the mall, in an unnoticed, by most patrons, little shop crowded with wizards and witches and numerous other things that went bump in the night, an old man raised his glass.

"To friends." he toasted simply. "May they always be."

THE END