

OF HORSES

and Wizards

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I furiously typed seven choice curse words involving horses at the wannabe Wiccan on the messageboard. M'gick or Mgick.com was where practitioners of The Art most often hung out. At the turn of the 80s, magic was pretty much wiped clean because the new information age meant that the Artists were less in demand due to their "unscientific" ways of dealing with problems in life. Our way was unpredictable and free, which is something not popular with the ones holding onto the big chairs.

Right now, Line_of_Pine369 was telling me that horse-tail and Pablo Escobar's favourite powder would result in a performance enhancing drug that will escape all tests. Our art didn't work that way. You don't just put two random things together during sundown or sunrise and produce magic. If that was the case, newly-wed couples on a honeymoon at the beach would be the most powerful practitioners, provided their idea of romance was using the blender while watching a beautiful sunset. These kids...

I called him rowdier versions of someone who loves horses and closed the tab just as my phone rang. Unknown number. Maybe a client. I swiped the green orb to the right.

There was a loud explosion and an acrid smell of burnt flesh.

I was thrown several feet across the room more by base survival instinct than the explosion.

"Who likes horses now?" said an electronically distorted voice.

I was hanging upside down from my ceiling fan's hook in my underwear. Both my arms were tied behind my back and from what I could feel, my hand wasn't burnt. Great, I was hit by an illusion. This means I picked up the call and talked to someone; enough time for me to be gripped by an incantation. With blurry vision, I looked down at my well ventilated underpants and realized that the ill-placed hole was the least of my problems.

Have you ever woken up with your face six inches from a pony's butt? From what I could tell, it was a very well-fed pony. By well-fed, I mean it was quite recently allowed to pig out on high quality hay.

"So, you think it's funny to troll a wizard?" The voice crackled all around my room.

"I don't know, man. You're into some weird stuff. I wasn't wrong to say the least."

Think fast, think fast. How do you get away from this situation? Keep talking. The longer I can stall, the more time I have to figure something out and avoid the course of events that will lead to some serious brown-nosing.

The horse backed an inch.

I held my breath wishing I was Voldemort. His facial physiology would at least be able to avoid the worst of this.

"Oh, what joy it is to have someone's life in the grip of my fingers?" said Line_of_Pine369, his voice laced with the smugness.

"I wouldn't exactly call receiving a Stink Face from a diarrhoeatic horse to be life threatening but your call, man," I replied.



ILLUSTRATION:
SALMAN SAKIB

"SILENCE! Your life rests on my whims and such insolence will only push it towards its end," rumbled Line_of_Pine369's voice.

Oh great. My antagonist seems to have a liking for Darth Vader's voice and charm.

The pony backed another inch. My eyes started watering. I needed to waste time to think myself out of this situation.

"Whose apprentice were you? This sure as hell ain't something one can learn alone," I said.

"Aha. I did no such things. I only slaved away for myself and no other wizard," he replied.

Okay, so this guy was self-taught. Self-taught means that he might have the raw power to do things but he might lack the finesse and versatility to get himself out of the situation. A part of the horse's anatomy pulsed in enthusiasm and closed another inch from my nose. This was the worst villainous countdown ever. But if I was alive, or at least my olfactory system was till now, it meant the wizard wanted something from me. Shouldn't take long for that—

"WIZARD! I want your name. The full name and you know what lying would mean under such circumstances," rumbled Line_of_Pine369 voice.

Several things clicked into my mind at once. I'd almost say that horse butts are great performance enhancers. The wizard came for my name and he was overconfident but not exactly stupid. Names are extremely powerful; a piece of information you'll find from countless books and mages. With someone's name, you can literally control

them in any way you want or devour their brains if you are into the Black Arts.

I am not weak by any standards and my strength lies in my versatility which includes a good arsenal of mental defenses. This little kid managed to go through that over the phone somehow...oh my god I just realized what happened. I am so very stupid. I deserve this.

The horrible smell from the horse disappeared. Probably because in its place, there was a unicorn now.

"FOOL, YOU DARE USE TRANSFIGURATION AGAINST ME?" thundered Line_of_Pine369.

"Yeah, only if you count two-bit illusions inside my head as conjurations. You're a hack. A fraud. Albeit one with very good illusory powers," I replied, my voice level and relaxed. I was still wasting time, letting my nose recover.

"FOOL! I WILL COME BACK!" screamed a high-pitched, vaguely pubescent voice.

There was a loud flash and bang as the illusion spell was broken.

My phone read 1 hour 56 minutes and it hung up with the call bill message popping up instantaneously.

The Neanderthal made me call him back long distance all this time.

Great.

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