October had finally arrived, with the usual number of stores suddenly appearing just to sell Halloween stuff. Jake was looking from one to another in search of cheap items for his magician’s costume. Not that it was *exactly* a costume—Jake really was a magician, or one in training. Even if, somehow, he seemed to fumble every trick, he kept at it.

*What I need is a good look. I’ll have more confidence if I look the part.* A cape, wand, bowtie, and even suit had been easily found but weirdly a hat was not. He was about to give up shopping for the night when he spotted one last shop. “Garmia’s Smart Wares. Well, it’s worth a try.”

At the register desk near the door was a woman with bubblegum pink hair and pointed ears. She smiled. “Welcome to my shop! All of my wares are the latest in smart magitech, guaranteed to enhance your magical experience! What sort of thing do you need?”

“A magician’s hat. It’s the only thing I can’t seem to find anywhere.”

“You’re in luck! Just go to aisle eight and you’ll find what you need!”

The isles weren’t just numeric but also alphabetical, with a long list of items down each one. The eight-aisle had headgear, among other items, and a huge variety of them ranging from turbans to conical to what he was looking for! There were plenty of them, so he took his time, finally picking a black one with bright blue trim. The price was also great. “This’ll be perfect! I can’t wait to try it on!”

“That’s an excellent choice in hat!” the woman smiled as she put it in a bag after Jake paid. “I’ll be here until the end of the month if you have any questions or need any help.”

“Thanks!”

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Back at home, Jake put on his suit and then his hat. The effect was very nice. Looking himself in the mirror he thought he at least *looked* the part now. “Oh, I couldn’t agree more.”

Jake looked around even though he knew he’d locked the door and there was nowhere to hide. “Who said that?”

“I did.” The voice seemed to be coming from above!

“My *hat* is talking to me?!”

“Well, it’s certainly not your shirt. While you have commendable taste in clothing, I fear all of it but me is sadly lacking in magical properties. Then again, you are too.”

“So, wait, you’re a *real* magic hat?”

“Oh dear. They had warned me that humans were a bit dense, but I hardly expected this.”

“Hey! It just takes some getting used to! It’s not like I encounter *actual* magic on a regular basis.”

“More likely you do but don’t realize it. Never fear, I am going to help you in that regard.”

“You’re going to help make me more magical?”

“Yes, that’s what you want, isn’t it?”

“Yeah, though I’m not sure about my hat doing all the work. I’d like to be the one doing the magic.”

“Quite admirable of you. I certainly can help with that as well. In fact, it fits very nicely with your other desire.” The ring of blue around the hat’s trim began to glow. “Let’s see what’s *really* in you!”

Jake felt an odd sensation, as if there were a vacuum on his head. As it went on, he started to feel a drain. “Wh-what are you doing?!”

“I’m removing your humanity. Humans are not the most magical of creatures, after all. Once it’s removed, you’ll be a purely magical creature.”

“H-hey!” VWOOM! SWOOM! Jake tried to remove the hat, but it was stuck tight. It was not long after that he found he couldn’t reach it! Looking in the mirror he saw that he was actually shrinking! His clothes were getting loose as he was raised off the ground. *No, the hat’s still where it was, my legs are just too short to reach!* “Whoa! This feels weird! Put me down!”

“Don’t be silly and stop squirming! You’re not even half drained yet.”

Jake watched as his shoes and pants fell off. His feet started to get larger and he could see and feel the white fur covering them. His legs were also getting hairier and his ears were getting long and fuzzy. “Wait, I’m turning into a rabbit?!”

“Yes, that seems to be the case. Sadly, I’m not surprised. A magician’s rabbit is about the lowest form of magical familiar next to a frog or toad. So utterly common. I had hoped better.”

“I’m not exactly pleased about this myself.” Jake’s shirt fell off and he watched his arms, hands and belly start to gain white fur. His teeth felt weird as they rearranged themselves in his mouth. “I thought you said I’d be more magical.”

“Oh, you *are*, but I can only turn you into something with the same magical potential you had as a human.”

“Wonderful.” Somehow the hat was keeping Jake attached to it as he shrank. The final bit of his humanity was sucked out and POIT! he felt a fluffy white tail grow in. “This feels so weird. Will you please put me down?”

“Certainly.” The hat released him, and he fell onto a pillow. It was black and white with red tassels. His suit was nowhere to be seen. “Did you turn my clothes into a pillow?”

“Of course. I’m not a cruel hat. I wanted you to have a soft landing. Well, what do you think?”

The hat sounded eager for compliments that Jake was not ready to give, but he decided to look at himself in the mirror to see. He was cute and nicely fluffy. He could see around himself enough that when he wiggled his tail, he could both see and feel it. He tried a few exercises with his ears and found them nicely expressive.

“Not bad. Not bad at all. I could be taller, I guess, but my hands seem to work mostly the same.” His thumbs and fingers were thicker, but he could still move them. Being on two legs felt odd but was doable. And he could still talk, which was also nice.

“I did the best I could with what I had. It’s not my fault you’re not very talented. At least you’re not a toad.”

“Sure, sure. If I were a frog, I could give up magic and make a career dancing and singing.”

“What?”

“Never mind. I would guess, you can’t turn me human again?”

“Magical creatures can’t become more mundane, only more magical. You *might* be able to learn to do that on your own, but I’m not sure how.”

“You’re a magic hat, aren’t you?”

“I’m programmed to know how to do a number of things with my own magical abilities. I’m not programmed to know how to help others do things with *their* abilities.”

“Hmm. Would that person with pink hair know?”

“Garmia is a most skilled artificer. She was the first elf to recognize the advantages of merging human technology with magic. If anyone knows, she will.”

“Well then, let’s get hopping!”

“Really? You’re going for the wordplay already?”

“I’m a magical rabbit, I have every right to make as many rabbit-related puns as I want.” Jake grinned and bounded towards the door. He wasn’t sure what lay ahead, but he was eager to find out.