

Release that Witch... and Wizard?!

Disclaimer: All characters here are at least 18. Hogwarts starts later, so by the time Harry arrives, he's 19. Cheng Yen (陈嫣) was in her mid-20s before waking up in the 21-year-old body of Garcia Wimbledon. Witches gain their first awakening upon adulthood, at 18 years of age.

Story Starts

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Chapter 4.1 -

Understanding and the Start of a New Dawn

“The **Second Law of Thermodynamics** is a physical law based on universal empirical observation concerning heat and energy interconversions. A simple statement of the law is that heat always flows spontaneously from hotter to colder regions of matter (or 'downhill' in terms of the temperature gradient). Another statement is: "Not all heat can be converted into work in a cyclic process."^{[1][2][3]}”

Garcia Wimbledon couldn't suppress the grin that was forming on her face. She then thought of clicking universal empirical.

“In metaphysics, a **universal** is what particular things have in common, namely characteristics or qualities. In other words, universals are repeatable or recurrent entities that can be instantiated or exemplified by many particular things.^[1]”

A new screen flickered into being, crowding the first with dense text on the laws of the universe. She brushed it away with a stray thought, her mind narrowing back to the Thermodynamics page until the words: "Entropy production as correlation between system and reservoir."

Her screen shifted to the New Journal of Physics, the whole paper opening in a dense PDF.

Her perk for taking 'Recruit the witch and wizard' route was now the availability of the hyperlinks leading outside the website. Unfortunately, she tried to access websites like Google, Netflix, YouTube, and even the familiar Baidu, iQIYI and Bilibili, each link turned out to be nothing more than plain text.

Perhaps one day I could unlock those as well.

"You know if you hold that face long enough, it'll stick." Harry teased from her right. On her left, Nightingale lingered—quiet, watchful, as silent as a shadow.

Garcia stuck her tongue out at him, her usual regal mask vanishing. "How very princely of you," Harry drawled sarcastically.

"And with that, I think this is my cue; your assistant minister's approaching," Harry said as he walked towards the door. Nightingale vanished—still present, most likely, but the only one of the three who stayed hidden, and the only one who'd refused Garcia's offer of employment.

"Oh yeah, you wanted a wake-up call at around what—six in the morning?" Harry asked, looking at his watch.

Garcia nodded in reply just as the door banged open, Barov entering in a rush of authority. Harry tossed him a greeting, but the assistant minister brushed past without pause, homing in on Garcia.

Harry cast one look over his shoulder, head shaking at the slight. Then, with a grin, a wink, and a careless wave followed.

"I'll be with Anna," he declared to the room just before he turned the corner.

"Your Highness. The deed is done. The 'witch' and 'wizard' were hanged at noon," Barov intoned, voice clipped and official.

"Good, could anyone tell?" Garcia murmured, fountain pen—courtesy of Harry—moving as she wrote, "The condemned all go hooded, after all."

"Yes, Your Highness, the wizard altered the condemned's appearance just before they were hanged," Barov said with a slight sneer.

To prevent trouble with the Holy Church, Garcia ordered the prison warden to find a death row criminal with a similar figure and use them to replace both Anna and Harry at the gallows.

Harry—proving that her decision to hire him wasn't a mistake—offered to transform the two who were headed for death row just before being hanged.

He called it a polyjuice potion. He hadn't even needed a whole vial. Its quirk, he explained, was that it reshaped a person into whoever's hair was mixed into the brew.

Garcia, curious, wondered aloud if saliva, nails, or skin might serve as well—surely it tied to their essence, their DNA. Harry only reddened, embarrassed, and confessed ignorance.

Not wanting to waste what he said was an irreplaceable resource, Garcia left her DNA theory untested. The real twist, though: if the drinker died in disguise, the corpse stayed that way forever.

So even if anyone examined the corpses, they'd see Anna and Harry buried and dead. The real problem would come when she revealed them alive again.

Everyone but the Chief Knight and Barov got twenty gold royals apiece for silence—a windfall in their eyes. Good thing those leering perverts weren't there or she might've backed Barov's idea of silencing them permanently.

When he said irrelevant, he meant those who don't have the trust of both the Chief Knight and the Assistant Minister.

She knew she couldn't prevent this secret from spreading, but this didn't matter because she actually wanted someone to spread the word—just not now. She would clash with the Church sooner or later, since she couldn't tolerate the fact that those idiots would waste such valuable resources!

If other witches heard there was a town where they could live freely and even get special treatment, what would they think?

Regardless of the era, talent and human resources were the most critical assets.

"Excellent," Garcia said smoothly., "Now, prepare me a report: the past year's trade, taxes, and expenditures. I would also like you to record the number and sizes of steel, textile, and pottery workshops in the city."

"I'll need three days to prepare these records, but..." Barov first nodded, then faltered.

"What is the matter?" Garcia asked—as this was pretty much out of character, though everything since yesterday had been—and she knew her ability to lie was about to be put to the test. Barov undoubtedly had questions about yesterday. She was a scoundrel, always had been, but being one didn't mean she was brainless. To Barov, though, harbouring a witch, much less a wizard, was no less than a declaration of war on the world.

"Your Highness, I don't understand..." Barov wrestled with his words. "Although you've caused trouble in the past, it was always harmless. But this? Risking so much... only for a witch and warlock?"

Barov's face tightened. "And that wizard—he's worse. Everyone knows witches can't bear children. If the Church hears of a male witch—wizard—they'll bring their whole force down to burn this fiefdom. Even you father lent his weight to their decree, urging the hunt."

Garcia thought for a moment and asked, "Do you believe that this border town is a good place to live in?"

"Uh, this..." Barov didn't understand what this question had to do with the problem, but eventually answered truthfully, "Not really."

"It's miserable. Compared to Valencia or the Port of Clearwater, what chance would I ever have of winning the throne from my siblings?"

Barov struggled for words, then gave a reluctant nod. "...Almost none."

"So, I can only choose another path." Garcia watched expressionlessly as Barov walked into his trap. "A path that would even finally even impress my father."

She hadn't taken the sentimental route of defending witches as blameless—it would never sway him. Barov, twenty years steeped in politics, understood power, not pity. For such men, profit always outweighs principle.

Garcia recalled how the prince before her had never fought with tears or pleas, and nor would she—neither of them had been deemed righteous. Instead, she chose the ancient struggle between secular rule and sacred power, a wound that had long troubled Wimbledon III.

The Church claimed that the world worked under the will of God and that the Pope was the voice of God. If the people found what he said was full of lies, the dominance of the Holy Church would be greatly undermined.

To argue 'witches are not evil, and must be spared' would be wasted breath. But to promise 'witches are not evil, and can be turned against the Church?' That was a language Barov understood.

"No matter how my brothers' and sisters' lands prosper, all will fall into the Church's grasp. They've already set forth their creed—the divine right of kings, blessed only by the Pope. So tell me, Barov, are we rulers at all, or only their puppets?" Garcia paused, voice steady. "My father will find in me new hope: a sovereign free of the Church's yoke, wielding the true rights of a king. His choice, then, will be certain."

Changing the "enemy of the entire world" into "enemy of only the Church" was easier to accept, especially since Barov himself stood on the side of the royal family.

"If he realises witches' power can break the Church, the execution orders will mean nothing. No certainty—but a chance. Worth the risk, isn't it?" Garcia's eyes bored into him. "Don't doubt me, Barov. Twenty years as assistant minister, and if I'm crowned Queen Wimbledon IV, I could strike off that 'assistant'—perhaps even name you... Hand of the King

As Barov left, Garcia felt a flicker of relief. He clearly didn't put much stock in her promise—which was fair, since even she doubted such a hasty plan could succeed. What mattered was that he believed in her resolve.

"Those were a lot of lies," Nightingale said, appearing behind her. "Or at least you didn't believe in your argument with your Assistant Minister."

Nightingale drifted closer, slipping onto Garcia's desk, one leg dangling loose, the other planted firm.

Garcia just shrugged, “I can’t approach a politician with emotional outbursts about how I want for Border Town to be a safe haven to witches, and that they aren’t inherently evil.”

“Truth...” Nightingale breathed, slipping slightly on the desk as she gazed at Garcia with wide-eyed wonder.

“I’ve thought on this often. To brand someone evil for what they are is folly. Evil lies in choice, in deed—not in talent. Your gifts should have been called miracles, not the devil’s minions.” Garcia straightened, rolling the knots from her shoulders.

And with one last yawn and stretch, “Now a bed is calling me. Good evening Nightingale, I’ll see you tomorrow.”

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END

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